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Cabinet tries to calm fears on GM food

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

FIVE Cabinet ministers joined forces last night in an unprecedented offensive to meet public concern over genetically modified food and crops.

After a week on the back foot and government confusion, John Prescott and his four Cabinet colleagues most involved in the controversy over so-called Frankenstein foods wrote to every MP in an attempt to calm the outbreak of public and media concern.

They promised that their first responsibility as ministers was to protect consumers and the environment. They insisted that public health was their first priority.

In a letter issued by Downing Street, they gave a clear pledge to ban the cultivation in Britain of any GM crops that are shown to have a damaging impact on the environment. The letter contained no outright change of policy, but it marked a big change of tone in the Government's response after days of accusing the press of exaggerating the issue.

The five-page letter, signed also by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, Stephen Byers, the Trade Secretary, and Jack Cunningham, the Cabinet Office "Enforcer", was graphic evidence that the media and public outcry over the foods has shaken the Government.

The ministers voiced confidence that GM products now on sale were safe, said that no new products would be allowed onto the market until rigorous safety checks had been carried out and promised to oppose approval of foods at European Union level if any British safety assessments raised doubts about a product.

After indications during recent days that ministers are increasingly unlikely to allow the planting of GM crops in the near future, the ministers emphasised that there would

be no commercial planting unless the evidence of trials showed there would be no adverse impact.

It said that "limited and monitored" commercial planting "might" take place next year. There was a four-year programme of trials and the case for commercial planting would be considered each year based on available evidence.

The letter was designed both to reassure the public and to underline the scientific case for genetic modification, which could help to produce more nutritious and tastier food and enable the development of crops that benefit the environment because fewer pesticides would be needed to enable them to thrive.

"Throughout history," the ministers said, "scientific advances have raised new fears. Some of these have proved irrational, others have proved well judged. The Government's first priorities are to protect people and the environment. But we must do so in ways that do not deny to our people the healthcare, environmental, economic and other benefits that flow from technological advances."

It added: "That would be an abdication of the responsibility placed on us."

The letter to MPs of all parties was accompanied by a 50-page factfile about the development of GM foods.

The letter came after environmental activists launched new protests. Greenpeace campaigners dumped four tonnes of soy beans outside Downing Street in protest at Tony Blair's support for GM foods.

In Liverpool, police arrested six Greenpeace activists who had entered Seaford grain

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Two Kurdish protesters give themselves up to riot police after leaving the Greek Embassy yesterday

Handcuffs as Kurds end siege

By Adrian Lee and Richard Duce

THE occupation of the Greek Embassy in London ended peacefully yesterday, after almost 60 hours, when 77 Kurdish demonstrators gave themselves up to police.

There was a last minute hitch over the terms of surrender but, with firemen standing by in case protesters carried out threats to burn themselves, the end came just after 2pm.

Babis Patsouris, an embassy clerk who had been held hostage, was the first to emerge. As the protesters were searched, some handcuffed, and led away, they gave victory signs and chanted: "long live our leader".

Mr Patsouris, who was unarmed, shook hands with one of his captors before being reunited with Greek Embassy staff and his family.

Last night 73 men and four

women were being questioned at two police stations where they were held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The end to the siege was delayed for an hour after police refused demands that the occupiers would not face charges. Following their arrest, several hundred supporters outside the embassy said they would not leave.

Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, gave details of the operation, which began in the early hours of Tuesday when the front door of the embassy, in Holland Park, West London, was smashed.

He said that during negotiations no deals were done: "They knew they were going to be arrested and they were arrested." Sir Paul said police had been placed on alert for further Kurdish protests.

"At times it was very tense and dangerous but we were very pleased it came to a con-

clusion safely and peacefully. We were able to reassure them about their treatment. We have honoured that promise."

The embassy was being checked for damage and weapons. Although police said there was no evidence that the occupiers were armed, they

were seen holding what appeared to be fire bombs and it was feared that the embassy may have been doused with petrol.

Yesterday, it became clear from early morning that a breakthrough was near. Speaking by telephone from inside the modern building, the protesters said that they were prepared to leave. They were said to be satisfied that the British Government would seek reassurances about the treatment of Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader, whose capture triggered the occupation. But it is believed that demands by the occupiers that they be allowed to hold a press conference were refused.

Lord Rea and the Labour MP Ann Clwyd, members of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, were brought to the embassy.



Babis Patsouris shook hands with his captor

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Police to face 'fairness commission' on race laws

By Richard Ford, Stewart Tandler and Philip Webster

THE POLICE are to be brought within Britain's anti-race laws under plans for reforms to reassure ethnic minorities after the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

A powerful new body to investigate racial, sexual and disability discrimination is being considered by ministers as a way of toughening the Government's response to prejudice. It would also have a remit to tackle ageism and be known as the human rights commission or fairness commission.

As the new organisation will take years to set up, the Cabinet is expected to agree to bring police into a revised version of the 1976 Race Relations Act in an attempt to meet criticisms expected in next week's report by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny on the murder of the black teenager.

One plan would be to allow the Commission for Racial Equality to conduct formal investigations into police operations. This change would make it unlawful for the police to discriminate on racial grounds. People would also be allowed to sue chief constables and police authorities for alleged racism.

Yesterday the prospect of sweeping change was welcomed by one of the youngest chief constables in the country who put down a marker to succeed Sir Paul Condon as Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

Ian Blair, 45, chief constable of Surrey, gave his colleagues a warning that the police service was facing the most sweeping challenge to outdated working methods and attitudes in 25 years. Setting out an ambitious plan for change

needed in the wake of the Lawrence inquiry, Mr Blair delivered an astonishing aside to his colleagues and Sir Paul in particular.

He said the service's response to Sir William's report into the handling of the Lawrence murder should at the least show "some real humility".

Mr Blair's speech, in which he compared the 43 police forces to a sleeping industrial giant living on its laurels, was seen by observers as an application for the job of Metropolitan Commissioner. He presented himself as the man with the vision and drive to head the service in the early years of the 21st century and as an officer who was "comfortable" with the criminal justice policies pursued by the Government.

But Mr Blair said that although race would be a key issue after the publication of the Macpherson report, there were other challenges facing the service whose working culture was out of date. "This is not about race, solely. It is about the mindset of the organisation."



Ian Blair: compared police to a sleeping giant

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TV Countdown's guilty secret is out at last

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

COUNTDOWN, the gentle quiz programme beloved by Scrabble addicts and crossword fans, was forced to own up to a guilty secret last night. Celebrity guests who sit in "dictionary corner" of Channel 4's longest running show are not quite as clever as they seem. Thanks to a tiny earpiece they are prompted by experts if they have trouble solving a particular conundrum.

Regular faces like Cyles Brandreth, Stephen Fry and Jo Brand, who are challenged to beat the contestants, have the luxury of being guided by Mark Nyman, the co-producer, a former world Scrabble champion.

The news may come as a surprise to fans of Countdown which has become a cult programme after 17 years, largely thanks to its cosy presenters Richard Whiteley and Carol Vorderman. The secret was revealed by The Times column-

ist Matthew Parris when he appeared as a guest on BBC Radio 5's Late Night Live and discussed the recent furore over faked TV shows.

Mr Parris admitted that when he had appeared in dictionary corner he had been fitted with an earpiece and helped by a wordsmith backstage. Contestants on Count-



"You've been watching Countdown again, haven't you?"

down select nine letters then have 30 seconds in which to use them to construct the longest word they can. Celebrity guests are later asked if they can top the winning word.

Mr Parris said: "You can pick your own words if you want, but I found the suggestion from control came much faster. I used to wonder why the celebrities were so clever - and now I know."

Yesterday Mr Brandreth, a former Tory MP, who has been with the programme since it started, said: "The earpieces have never been made a secret. We need the help and we are very grateful for it. However Carol doesn't get any prompting at all."

He added: "It seems Matthew, not content with outing Peter Mandelson, is trying to out Countdown as well."

Mr Parris commented: "Dear me. These last few months I seem to have been stumbling around saying things which I thought everybody already knew."

Death certificates get brighter look

By Alexandra Frean, Social Affairs Correspondent

AN IMPROVED - and decidedly more cheerful - design for English and Welsh birth and death certificates has been produced by the Office of National Statistics.

Out go the sombre grey/black background of death certificates and the rose tint of birth certificates. Replacing them will be a pastel blue background with a central design incorporating the rose and daffodil emblems of England and Wales.

Register offices will begin to issue the certificates from late spring onwards, but those issued centrally by the Office for National Statistics - usually to replace a lost document - will be in the new design only after existing stocks have been used up.

There have been minor changes to certificates in recent years, but the new look is the first major design since existing background tints were introduced 50 years ago. The changes will be phased

in so that all birth, death and still-birth certificates issued from January 1, 2000 will be in the new design.

About four million certificates are issued each year, including those for such purposes as the study of genealogy and passport applications.

A government spokesman last night denied that the change was a New Labour ploy to put a more positive spin on even the darkest of occasions such as death.

"Actually, the Stationery Office started thinking about these changes in early 1997 under the last Government. It's just that it has taken rather a long time to sort it all out," he said.

He added that secret design elements would also make the certificates - which will now be issued in a standard A4 size - harder for would-be forgers to counterfeit.

The new certificates have been given a trial run in Bolton, Lancashire.



Their Lordships find erogenous zones in unlikely places

Maps of the human body have been made, magnifying erogenous zones and telescoping the rest. Our skin surface is charted with area proportional to the number of nerve endings. The picture is weird: lips, nipples and fingertips swollen; legs and stomach pitifully shrunk.

Each of us views the world outside in a comparably distorted way. Our map enlarges places where the nerve endings of our attentiveness cluster. Some Times readers

would have London's West End covering half the map, with Watford near the top. For some Scottish readers Hadrian's Wall would appear near the bottom.

Assemblies, too, offer their maps of the modern world. For the past two days this sketch has migrated to the Lords. They see things differently there.

Take Wednesday. This featured a Private Notice Question on Gibraltar. Ministers (represented by the Baroness Symons) were sticking to the

Foreign Office's strikingly half-hearted line, declining to condemn Spanish provocation there. But a rock which, to the Foreign Office, is an embarrassing little dot on the horizon, was huge to their lordships. From the number and agitation of their interventions, Spain was the irritating dot: a huddle of foreigners separating Great Britain from the most enormous rock, teeming with apes and patriots. That part of the peers' world map that was not occupied by Gibraltar seemed to



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

be largely taken up by Otterburn. I had never heard of Otterburn, but this artillery firing range in the Northumberland National Park was as familiar to peers as Piccadilly Circus. One after another, grizzled barons struggled to their feet to denounce proposals that it might be closed. Viscount Slim was incandescent.

Lord Burnham was anxious. Lord Redesdale knew all about it. "My Lords, despite the bangs," protested the normally dry Lord Carver, a retired field marshal, "these are as extremely suitable for the preservation of wildlife." There was a rumble of assent. "Does not the Army need this range," spluttered Lord

Campbell of Croy, "in the same way that I was able to calibrate my 25-pounders in the Second World War before I took my battery abroad?"

For a 90s generation to whom "taking your battery abroad" might refer to energising the kids' Playstation on a package holiday to Benidorm, the realisation that a firing range in Northumberland looked, to peers, bigger than Spain, may come as a shock. Otterburn is one of their erogenous zones. Barons love being scratched there. And if shoot-

ing makes their nerve-ends tingle, so does hunting, fishing, and the countryside.

Yesterday hedgerows (for some of us just the narrow boundaries between fields) ran high, wide and deep through the Lords' imagination. Peers such as Lord Beaumont of Whitley, his beard a hedgerow in itself, spoke with passion on hawthorn and beech. I pictured an England in which (like those ancient maps where monster fish and wind-puffing cherubim elbow humdrum data aside) mere cit-

ies are all but obscured by hunts, hedges, grouse moors, cathedrals, village greens — and Otterburn.

The night before, peers had talked for three hours about the Separation of Powers. Lord Goodhart: "My Lords — the previous five speakers have all been over the age of 80 and two of them over 90 — the quality of their speeches is a good reason for not imposing a retiring age on Members of your Lordships' House." Noble Lords: Hear, heart!

Michael heads for victory in Welsh contest

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND VALERIE ELLIOTT

ALUN MICHAEL was last night heading for victory in the divisive battle to be leader of the Welsh Labour Party and become the party's candidate for First Secretary of Wales.

Mr Michael, the Blairite candidate who replaced Ron Davies after his resignation from the Cabinet, was set for a narrow win after securing the crucial vote of one of the biggest unions.

He was understood to have taken the vote of the GMB general union, which represents 6.3 per cent of the three-way electoral college that will determine the outcome of the leadership contest. Rhodri Morgan, his rival, had been hoping that GMB support would give him the edge in the contest. Yesterday he won the backing of the Manufacturing, Science and Finance union.

The GMB vote will be declared today and the overall result tomorrow. With both camps refusing publicly to predict the outcome, it appeared that Mr Michael would win the trade unions' and MPs' sections of the college, with Mr Morgan finishing ahead in the members' section.

Mr Michael's campaign has been dogged by accusations that the Labour leadership in



Michael believed to have won GMB vote

London and Wales has had to resort to old-style tactics to overcome the populist Mr Morgan, with union leaderships deciding their votes without consulting their members. However, the GMB is expected to emphasise today that its decision follows consultation with members at branch meetings.

If Mr Michael has won he will make an immediate gesture of reconciliation towards Mr Morgan in the hope that divisions can quickly be buried for the elections to the Welsh

assembly on May 6. The contest took another twist last night with confusion over the arrangements for counting ballot papers sent out to 25,000 party members. Kevin Brennan, campaign manager for Mr Morgan, asked the Labour Party's Millbank HQ to allow a scrutineer to witness the count and ensure that ballot papers had been properly received and counted. But last night it was still unclear whether the party hierarchy would accept the request.

The handling of the postal ballot is contracted to Unity Security Balloting, a subsidiary of the Unity Trust Bank. A spokesman at Unity Security declined to reveal details of the count or when and where ballot papers were opened before being counted because of its contract with Labour.

Party sources insisted that the company's system was scrupulously fair and followed strict rules. The count will take place electronically today when ballot papers are scanned into a machine. The process is to take place on machines owned by a pools company in Clerkenwell, London. The result will be declared in Cardiff Bay, home of the Welsh assembly.



Lord Porchester, heir to the Earl of Carnarvon, and Fiona Aitken, the fashion designer, after their wedding at the Savoy Hotel chapel in London, yesterday

IRA arms cache 'put together in ceasefire'

BY MARTIN FLETCHER
CHIEF IRELAND
CORRESPONDENT

DETONATORS found in an IRA arms cache seized in West Belfast on Tuesday were manufactured last year, when the IRA was supposed to be on ceasefire, the Royal Ulster Constabulary said yesterday.

The announcement raised serious questions about the IRA's intentions and caused Unionist and Conservative politicians to redouble their demands for IRA disarmament. The detonators were seized along with a loaded armalite rifle, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, four pounds of home-made explosives and eight coffee-jar bombs.

Robert McCartney, the UK Unionist Party leader who opposes the Good Friday peace accord, said that the seizure "highlights the folly of David Trimble even contemplating sitting in an executive with Sinn Féin ministers".

Mr Trimble, Northern Ireland's First Minister, rejected Mr McCartney's demand that his Ulster Unionist Party end all contacts with Sinn Féin, but said that the arms haul was "a matter of very grave concern". Sinn Féin officials responded angrily, calling the RUC the most discredited police force in Europe and accusing it of "pursuing a political agenda with the intention of wrecking the peace process".

Extremist few, page 13

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tax may be imposed on pesticides

The Government is considering imposing a tax on pesticides in an attempt to reduce environmental damage to the countryside and wildlife.

Patricia Hewitt, the Economic Secretary, said that the Government was exploring the tax system to secure environmental objectives. "Our economic aims must be achieved at the same time as developing social progress, protecting the environment and ensuring the prudent use of natural resources," she told a conference on environmental taxation held by the Institute for Public Policy Research, a left-wing think-tank.

Although the minister said she could not discuss the contents of the Budget on March 9, she made plain that measures to reduce the use of pesticides were high on the Government's agenda.

Its support for genetically modified food crops, which in theory would not require pesticides, is believed to have increased backing for a pesticide tax. Crop delays, page 12

Drugs admission

Patricia McMahon, the wife of the former European show-jumping champion Paddy McMahon, admitted her part in a £2 million international cocaine smuggling ring. Isleworth Crown Court was told that she was second in command of a gang that imported the drug from Peru hidden in asparagus. The case continues.

Spirits concern

Young adults are increasingly drinking spirits rather than beer and alcopops, a study of drinking patterns has shown. The report, published by the Office for National Statistics, says that consumption of spirits by those in the 16 to 24 age group rose last year. This may reflect a fashion rather than a long-term trend.

Fayed intervenes

Mohamed Al Fayed made a last-minute request to the French judge investigating the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, to question British Embassy officials in Paris and American security staff. The move will ensure that any trial in connection with the accident will be delayed by many months.

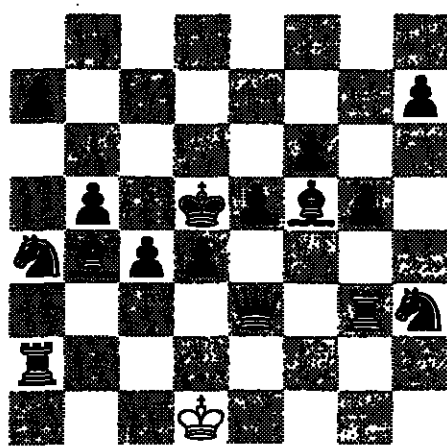
Priest dies

An inner-city priest who was beaten by two men who broke into his Lincoln vicarage has died in hospital. Friends said that Father John Hayes, 46, had lost a long battle against ill health and that last year's attack had also taken its toll. He died in Lincoln County Hospital almost exactly a year after the beating.

Officer's fraud

A policeman who used a Metropolitan Police order document to kit himself out in motorcycle gear has been given a suspended jail sentence by Marylebone magistrates. Glenn Buckett, 31, of Coptthorne, West Sussex, has resigned from the force. He was also ordered to pay £35 costs and £643.97 compensation.

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GM food protesters arrested on crane

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

POLICE made ten arrests yesterday as they reclaimed a crane on the Liverpool dockside occupied by four Greenpeace activists protesting against imports of genetically modified food.

Four protesters climbed onto the crane at 3.40pm with enough equipment and provisions to stay there for several weeks, and unfurled a banner with the words "Ban gene foods". They were hoping to prevent ships unloading modified soya at Seaforth Dock, but police ended their protest just before 7pm.

A convoy of Greenpeace vehicles, including four inflatable dinghies on trailers, was stopped overnight by Merseyside and Cheshire police on the M56 as they headed towards Liverpool. Several activists were questioned and the boats were impounded.

Peter Melchett, Greenpeace's executive director, said yesterday: "Genetically engineered soya is pouring into this country and Greenpeace is doing what Tony Blair ought to be doing — stopping it."

There is an overwhelming public demand for natural and organic food. People should go to the Liverpool docks and support the people on the crane. This is an opportunity to show the strength of public support for our campaign."

A spokesman for the Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company said that six people were arrested as they tried to storm Seaforth Dock. Four managed to evade capture and climb the crane superstructure.

Gene crops delay, page 12

Sun flights keep lateness record

BY JOANNA BAILE

PASSENGERS on charter flights last summer suffered an average delay of 37 minutes, according to figures released yesterday. The largest increase was for Britain's biggest holiday airline, Britannia.

One in five of Britannia's planes was more than an hour late — nearly double its figure for summer 1997. Ian Hamer of the Air Transport Users' Council, which published the figures, said: "Of the large carriers, Air 2000 has recorded a significantly improved performance, but Britannia has slipped badly and we are looking to the carrier to recover its position in the coming year."

Generally, delays to charter flights in and out of main UK airports last summer were about the same as in summer 1997 despite a 7 per cent increase in flights. The council's statistics relate to charter flights from April to October 1998 at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Luton, Manchester and Newcastle. The average delay was 37.6 minutes compared with 37.5 minutes in summer 1997: 17.25 per cent of flights were more than an hour late, compared with 17.88 per cent in summer 1997.

Flying Colours topped the table, with only 5.33 per cent of its flights more than one hour

CHARTER DELAYS

AIRLINE BY RANK	% more than last year	Avg. delay (mins)
1. Flying Colours	5.33	8.33
2. Britannia	6.48	14.60
3. British Airways	7.45	19.44
4. EasyJet	9.20	25.78
5. Air 2000	11.13	26.05
6. Air France	12.22	26.39
7. British Airways	14.15	34.00
8. Air 2000	14.37	27.57
9. European Air Charter	14.97	38.75
10. Thomson	15.52	44.77
11. British Airways	17.32	38.74
12. British Airways	22.74	24.44
13. Britannia Airways	25.50	44.03
14. Air France	26.54	44.46
15. British Airways	27.31	47.29
16. Air France	27.55	39.13
17. Air France	27.77	48.89
18. British Airways	27.73	47.98
19. British Airways	28.18	53.11
20. Air 2000	28.31	46.70

Source: Air Transport Users' Council

late and with an average delay of 8.33 minutes. The worst performer was Air Europa with 30.79 per cent of flights more than an hour late and with an average delay of 57.54 minutes.

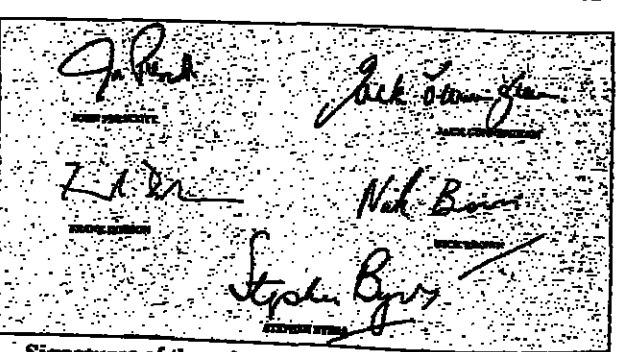
Air 2000 reduced its average delays from 39.12 minutes in summer 1997 to 27.57 minutes last summer.

Cabinet tries to calm fears

Continued from page 2
terminal at Liverpool Docks where they were trying to prevent ships unloading genetically modified food products.

The ministers, however, rejected a straight moratorium on the commercial planting of GM crops.

They said that while English Nature wanted a minimum three-year period for the trials before any crops were commercially planted, "we believe our approach offers sufficient safeguards to ensure that large-scale plantings do not proceed until we have sufficient evidence that the particular crop does not harm the environment."



Signatures of the ministers who signed Prescott letter

Government recognises that there is public concern about genetic modification.

The letter ends: "It is a fast moving science; we accept we

not have all the answers."

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Media, page 23

Move to the countryside, judge tells victim who 'fears blacks'

BY SUSIE STEINER

AN ASIAN assault victim who developed a fear of black people was advised by a judge yesterday to move to the remote countryside to avoid meeting people of Afro-Caribbean origin.

After Mr Justice Roushier had awarded Mohibur Rahman £575,000 in damages, he suggested that he move to the Welsh Hills or return to his native Bangladesh to combat the "intense and wholly irrational dread" of black people which kept him imprisoned in his South London home.

The High Court judge based the award on Mr Rahman's pain and suffering from the assault, and for care and loss of earnings. But he refused any award in relation to the victim's phobia of black people.

"I've been painted a picture of a man covering in his home, afraid to venture forth in fear of meeting black people. It's time for a little common sense to come into play," Judge Roushier told the court. "Of all the places he should not live, I suggest that South London tops the list."

"It is a multicultural city but it is not possible to go for a five-minute walk or enter a couple of shops without seeing people of Afro-Caribbean origin."

Judge Roushier said that there were still areas of the countryside which did not have substantial black communities, suggesting North Wales or Scotland to Mr Rahman.

"It's not as though it will be

tearing him from his roots, as they are in Bangladesh, and his enjoyment of London, if it can so be called, is confined to the four walls of his uncle's flat."

"I think it would be wholly unrealistic to expect Mr Rahman not to move. Remaining in London would amount to failure to take reasonable steps to ameliorate his painful condition. He owes it to his wife, who so recently swapped her bridal robes for a nurse's apron."

He owes it to the next harmless West Indian he may assault in the street. But most of all, he owes it to himself."

Outside court, Mr Rahman's solicitor said that his client had found the judge's words "deeply offensive."

"Mr Rahman has no intention of going to North Wales," said Sadiq Khan. "It's unrealistic to expect him to uproot himself away from his family and community and live in rural England."

"Mr Rahman is British and finds it deeply offensive that it's suggested he go back to Bangladesh as a way of escaping black people."

Mr Rahman, 30, descended into psychotic paranoia four years ago after a vicious assault at the Central London burger bar where he worked as a manager. Described as bright and sociable before the attack, he was set upon by two suspected drug dealers in March 1995. They splashed boiling oil on his legs and

stamped on his face. As a result, Mr Rahman slumped into a severe depressive disorder which left him suicidal. His trauma was compounded when an operation on his right eye went wrong.

The judge said that Mr Rahman had been subjected to threats in the days leading up to the trial of one of his assailants and lived in dread of reprisals.

He had a tendency to misinterpret innocent actions and recently, while driving, tried to run down a black man walking along the pavement. He was unemployed, the court was told, and stayed in his flat "in alternating states of listlessness and terror."

Mr Rahman was awarded more than £7,000 from his employers, Aresense Ltd, for his physical injuries. The company, which contested the claim, was ordered to pay a further £175,000 for loss of earnings and care.

University College London Hospitals NHS Trust, which admitted liability in relation to Mr Rahman's eye operation, was ordered to pay more than £57,000 in general damages and £330,000 for loss of earnings and care.

Mr Rahman was denied an additional £200,000 claimed by his solicitors to cope with his phobia of black people. Judge Roushier said: "It's another instance of where the constant need to increase damages has outstripped both reasonableness and reality."



A covered up Mohibur Rahman arriving at the High Court in London yesterday

CONTROVERSIAL LINE IN JUDICIAL ADVICE

This is not the first foray into controversy for Sir Richard Roushier, one of Britain's most senior judges. The 67-year-old member of the Garter Club shocked a courtroom last year when he advised a 13-year-old alleged rape victim how to mix a Pimm's. The teenager had just told a jury of her ordeal, describing how she got drunk on neat Pimm's, when Judge Roushier embarked on his advice: "Take this from an experienced Pimm's drinker like me. If you want to drink, wait until you're older. But if you can't wait, dilute the drink with one part Pimm's to six parts of something else." He told the schoolgirl: "In 1996 he made the headlines when he

condemned "legal bureaucrats" who required 46 different documents before prosecuting a violent youth. The judge accused the Crown Prosecution Service of "paper lust". After Jonathan Jones was convicted of killing his fiancée's parents, Harry and Megan Toole, in South Wales, Mr Justice Roushier, the trial judge, wrote to the Home Secretary saying he was surprised by the jury's decision. Mr Jones was subsequently freed.

More recently, the judge has presided over several prominent cases including the dispute between the arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi and the Ritz Casino over a small matter of a £10 million gambling bill.

Father-in-law goes to court to win back couple's cash

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A DOCTOR has successfully sued his son and daughter-in-law, whose arranged marriage broke down, for the return of £29,600 he provided them with to set up home.

Ruby Arefin, who is divorcing her husband, Shamsul, and lives apart from him in a two-bedroomed flat in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, claimed the money was a gift, not a loan, and suggested the action at Barnsley County Court was a ploy to recover her share of the matrimonial home.

After the hearing, at which Judge John Swanson decided that the couple should jointly repay the cash, Mrs Arefin said her father-in-law, Dr Mohammed Haq, "is just doing this to get back at me. I never want to see him again."

Dr Haq, 61, from Ravenfield, near Rotherham, told the court: "I had an excellent relationship with her before it broke down. I was very anxious about her becoming pregnant. I was looking forward to having a grandchild." He said they fell out when she changed her dress and "became more modern". He said: "I didn't like the way she went out on her own and didn't wear a headscarf. She started associating with criminals of another community, alcoholics, drug addicts and muggers. This is not good for us."

When asked if the court action was a family ploy to get back his daughter-in-law's equity in the matrimonial home, he said: "We are not cheating people."

Mrs Arefin did not meet her husband, a dentist, until three weeks before their wedding 11 years ago. For the first six months she could not consummate the marriage. She said Dr Haq, a GP in Conisbrough, South Yorkshire, tried to influence their relationship and was desperate for her to have a male grandchild. She said she had several intimate conversations with him

and they fell out after he talked to her about having an internal operation to improve her sex life.

Mrs Arefin, who was born in London of Bangladeshi parents and has a six-year-old son, Najib, with her husband, told the court: "I found it strange he was asking these personal questions. I hardly knew him. I have never had such discussions with my family." She said Dr Haq flaunted his wealth and criticised her choice of Pakistani friends. "Dr Haq liked to control what I did and who I saw."

Outside court she said: "The court's decision means I will end up with nothing when I get divorced. My share of the house when it is sold will go to my father-in-law. He's taken everything from me apart from my son. It's ironic because he wanted a grandson so much."

Mr Arefin, who practises in Malibu, near Rotherham, still lives in the house.

Finding for Dr Haq, Judge Swanson said he had not found it easy to reach a decision. "I do not think Mrs Arefin is a dishonest person. She has always thought the money was a gift although it was intended as a loan by Dr Haq."



Ruby Arefin: claimed the money was a gift

GQ Editor loses job over praise for 'stylish' Nazi

BY CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

JAMES BROWN, the magazine editor who created *Loaded* and celebrated laddishness, resigned as Editor of *GQ* last night after claims that he had glorified the Nazis.

Nicholas Coleridge, managing director of Condé Nast, cited "philosophical differences" between him and Brown as the reason for his abrupt departure.

It came days after some members of the Jewish community expressed disgust that

GQ had named Field Marshal Rommel, who led the Nazi campaign in North Africa, in a list of the sharpest men of the 20th century. It ranked him alongside Sammy Davis Junior as someone who remained "stylish in the face of adversity".

Rabbi Barry Marcus of London's Central Synagogue said it was "offensive and disgraceful" that so-called style magazines should use the Holocaust and Nazi symbols as icons. Brown, 33, achieved stunning success with *Loaded*. Within three years it was selling nearly half a million copies in a men's market that had not previously existed.

A character of extremes, Brown spent many months addicted to alcohol and cocaine. But when he was asked to rescue the ailing *Gentleman's Quarterly* magazine in 1997, he became teetotal. However, the magazine did not put on the sales Condé Nast wanted. The row over the Nazis was the last straw, insiders said.

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Brown: first achieved success with *Loaded*

A downfall from gold card to scratchcard

A MAN spent more than £30,000 on lottery scratchcards after losing his job but never won a prize larger than £5, (Simon de Bruxelles writes). David Godfrey used his gold charge card to get the cash to buy hundreds of scratchcards a day in the hope of repaying his debts.

Instead Godfrey, 38, found himself owing American Express £33,667. At Exeter Crown Court he was told that he faced jail after he admitted obtaining services by deception. He applied for the credit card while working as a £26,000-a-year salesman in 1997, but claimed that he owned his parents' home and earned in excess of £35,000.

The account was maintained properly for more than a year until he lost his job. Then, each day, he would go to petrol stations and shops six or seven times, buy sweets, then ask for up to £50 cash-back on the charge card which he spent on scratchcards. He has agreed a repayment plan, but it was estimated that it would take him more than 70 years to repay the total. Sentencing was adjourned.

Hilary du Pré accused of betrayal over cash gift

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES
SOUTH WEST CORRESPONDENT

HILARY DU PRÉ, whose complex relationship with her cellist sister Jacqueline has been made into an Oscar-nominated film, was accused yesterday of betrayal by a family friend who gave up her life savings to save her from bankruptcy.

In May 1997, Myrle Grange-Bennett gave £30,000 to Hilary and her husband, Kiffer Finzi, after being told they faced eviction from their Hampshire home. Then last year Mrs Grange-Bennett, the 86-year-old widow of Jacqueline du Pré's godfather Norman, herself fell on hard times.

Unable to pay for repairs to her bungalow she turned to the couple for help. She knew that Hilary and her brother Piers had since written the best-selling memoir, *A Genius in the Family*, and that it been made into an acclaimed film.

She also knew that she had no legal claim on the money, but hoped that at least part of it would be returned in the spirit with which it was given. But despite the success of *Hilary and Jackie*, Hilary says she is unable to help. In a letter to Mrs Grange-Bennett she said: "The marvellous film will not, despite what you may have heard, generate money for Piers or me. You offered your gift of money 'with no strings attached'. It is so sad that the gift you gave with such big-heartedness, such generosity of spirit, has turned into what appears to be such bitterness."

Mrs Grange-Bennett began to have second



Myrle Grange-Bennett: needs live-in carer and repairs to home

thoughts about her gift when she learnt that the couple had kept a holiday home in Provence instead of selling it to pay their debts. Her own home is in urgent need of roof repairs and she has been advised by her GP to employ a live-in carer or move into a residential home. All that Hilary could offer was the assistance of her brother in approaching the Depart-

ment of Social Security for help.

Hilary and Piers' portrait of Jacqueline, who died of multiple sclerosis at the age of 42 in 1987, was condemned by friends of the cellist, including Lord Menuhin, Julian Lloyd Webber, Itzhak Perlman and Mstislav Rostropovich. Even Hilary's own daughter, Clare Finzi, 33, accused her mother of "gross misrepresentation". Jacqueline was depicted as a self-obsessed sexual predator who persuaded Hilary to let her have an affair with her husband. The three lived together for a while in the Hampshire farmhouse.

Mrs Grange-Bennett, who has known the du Pré family since 1936, said: "Hilary called me on the telephone and her voice sounded strange. She told me she was going to be evicted from her home after another failed business venture. I couldn't bear the thought of them being thrown out on the street so I gave them my money. At the time I really believed they would do the same for me."

"Since I gave them the money I have fallen on hard times myself and I have been left high and dry. I feel so betrayed." Kiffer Finzi said last night that if he had the money he would "repay it like a shot". His house in France, bought for £350 30 years ago, was "unsaleable" and his health food business was sold after an arson attack. Piers du Pré, speaking for his sister, denied that he or Hilary had earned a large amount of money from either the book or the film. Referring to the money from Mrs Grange-Bennett, Mr du Pré added: "It was not a loan, it was a gift."

Estranged wife took overdose in church

BY RUSSELL JENKINS
NORTH WEST CORRESPONDENT

THE wife of a deputy headmaster killed herself after she discovered that her estranged husband was seeing another woman, an inquest was told yesterday.

Helen Booth, 42, a devoutly religious mother of two teenagers, took an overdose of painkillers as she sat in a Methodist church in the village of Tissington in the Peak District.

Her body was discovered two days later, kneeling as if in prayer. She had left a note in her car parked near by and had written "Peace at last" in the church visitors' book.

The inquest in Glossop was told that Mrs Booth, who suffered from depression, had recently learnt that her husband David, 43, deputy headmaster at Neville Road School in Bramhall, had been seeing another woman.

Mr Booth told the inquest that he had moved out of the house before Christmas and his wife had known that he was spending time with another woman. Verdict: suicide.

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Stop ignoring wrongdoers, says Straw

The Home Secretary has intervened as a good citizen several times, reports Richard Ford

JACK STRAW urged people yesterday to join his crusade to end tolerance of anti-social and criminal behaviour, telling of how he himself had challenged a boy who was spitting at people at a railway station.

The Home Secretary disclosed that he had intervened on several occasions, tackling a burglar, a mugger, a man involved in an assault, and, just a fortnight ago, confronting an 11-year-old who was spitting on passengers from a parapet.

But Mr Straw, who regularly goes jogging, warned people not to put themselves in danger by "having a go", especially if they were not as fit as he is. He said that members of the public should instead perhaps speak to wrongdoers and added that older women on housing estates were often particularly likely to confront youngsters involved in anti-social behaviour. "I am not prepared to tell people to be a have-a-go hero," he said. "I am fit and active. It is about having a word with people."

The Home Secretary, who has intervened in incidents near his home in South London and in his Blackburn constituency, said that when it was safe to do so people should speak to youngsters doing wrong. He added, however, that people "should not do foolhardy things".

Addressing a conference in London organised by the Social Market Foundation, Mr Straw said that everyone had

a duty to help reduce crime. On four occasions he had intervened as a good citizen to detain a criminal or confront anti-social behaviour. In 1982 — when the future Home Secretary was an Opposition spokesman — he was at Oval Underground station when he saw a boy having his wallet stolen. He pursued the mugger and handed him over to the authorities.

On another occasion Mr Straw was at a constituency surgery when he heard the sound of breaking glass at a trade-union club. He went to investigate and collided with the thief making his getaway. "I chased after him and caught at the junction of Nab Lane. I got hold of him and took him to the police station," Mr Straw said.

In May 1993 Mr Straw saw a mugger attacking a 65-year-old woman in South London. He helped another man tackle the offender, wrestling him to the ground and tying his legs to stop him struggling until police arrived and arrested him.

The latest incident occurred 13 days ago when Mr Straw — accompanied at some distance by his armed police protection officer — was in his constituency. "I was waiting at the station and saw a lad spitting over a parapet onto a pedestrian walkway, hitting some people with his spit," Mr Straw approached the youngster and asked him whether he had considered what it would feel like

if he was spat upon while walking along. He said the lad, who did not recognise him, had at first talked back at him, had then calmed down.

A community worker in Glasgow said that Mr Straw was being simplistic. Bob Holman said: "It is the gift remark of a wealthy politician. Action needs to be taken collectively within a neighbourhood and by people who are in a good relation with the youngsters who cause trouble."

But church leaders welcomed the call for an end to the "walk on by" society. The Methodist Church said the Home Secretary was taking the example of the Good Samaritan seriously.



Jack Straw yesterday. He recently reprimanded a boy who was spitting at people

Britain divided into doers and thinkers

By Alex O'Connell

THE people of Britain are divided into those who would leap, like Clark Kent, into action at the scene of a crime, and those who would think twice before doing something they might regret.

The philosopher Roger Scruton said he had no option but to get stuck in when he saw three 12-year-old children vandalising the carriage of a London Underground train. He eventually stopped them. "I just went up and shouted."

However, Mr Scruton said that the law was making it more difficult for onlookers to get involved in a dispute. "The natural way is to go up and give the children a slap, but you would end up in jail and they know that."

Paul Killik, a senior partner of the southwest London stock-broking firm Killik & Co agreed. "I wouldn't always help because a quick reaction could find you contravening a law or rule."

Rabbi Julia Neuberger said that her instinct was to get in-

volved, but she realised that this was not always wise. "Where we used to live there was a street brawl and two rather large men much younger and bigger than me were laying into each other. I said, 'Don't you think it might be a good idea to stop that?' And they did."

Rabbi Neuberger said that another time she was in a bank during a smash and grab raid. "It was clear that the only sensible thing was to not get involved."

Martin Bell, MP for Tatton, said he was a natural interventionist. "I have more experience of war crimes than post office robberies. In the former you just don't walk on by."

Sylvia Morris, head teacher of Cathedral Primary School in southeast London, said fear of reprisals often overrode her moral instinct. "There is a saying around here that 'Bermondsey boys don't do'. In a school context, if you go and intervene you will get a brick through the window."

Keep out drugs
to cut cell deaths



Children at play on a South London estate yesterday

Clean-up is put to test in Straw poll

By Adam Sherwin

WHERE better to test Jack Straw's "get involved" plea than on his own patch? A tour of the Home Secretary's daily haunts, from the Home Office to his South London home, uncovered the kind of antisocial behaviour that often sends Mr Straw into collar-feeling action. Can one man, armed only with a copy of Mr Straw's speech, clean up the streets?

First stop, the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate. A family of four in matching shellsuits walks past. The youngest child tosses a chocolate wrapper over his shoulder. Time to step in. Shouldn't you put that into a bin? "Pick it up, son," orders the apologetic dad. Son obeys — a moral victory. Emboldened, I head towards Fimbo, where Mr Straw educated his son and was chairman of the governors at the comprehensive. Two known trouble-makers are observed acting suspiciously on College Green. They are Clare Short and Caroline Aherne, aka Mrs Merton, who are about to launch a campaign to tackle blindness. Ms Aherne sniffs into a tissue. "I have got a terrible cold," she complains. Perhaps sensing my fear that the tissue is about to litter the Green, Ms Aherne wisely tucks it into a pocket.

Time to head south of the river towards Kennington, Jack Straw's manor. Four children, aged about 8, are playing in a park adjoining a Lambeth estate. It appears that spitting is taking place. "I spit," claims one child proudly. Jack Straw says you shouldn't. The boy invokes *Match of the Day*. "Footballers have to spit. They do it all the time." Does anyone tell him not to spit? "My mum, but I don't listen to her."

A police van arrives and two

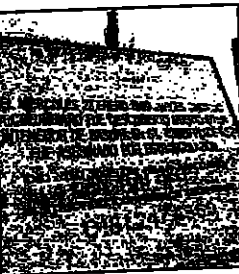
officers emerge to arrest a young black male. Can I assist? "No, please leave this to us," says an officer as he puts handcuffs on the man. The police get no support from the residents. "That boy is a harmless schizophrenic," says one woman. "There is no crime here. The police are racist," insists a man with four children. As he ushers them home, he unleashes a volley of spit.

St Agnes Place, which borders Kennington Park, is a crime hotspot. There has been a murder and a triple shooting in recent months. The road is covered in glass from a recently vandalised Fiat Uno. Two Rastafarian men approach from the house opposite as I inspect the damage. Could they have intervened to prevent the crime? "You shouldn't be here. This is private property," one suggests. He requests my business card and, when he has satisfied himself, allows me to leave.

A police sign in Spanish requests information on the murder of a Colombian man. "There is drug dealing and shooting on this estate but I wouldn't say anything to the police," a middle-aged black woman says.

Ena, a spritely 85-year-old, is carrying her shopping home. She is something of a "have-a-go granny". "I told some kids to stop causing trouble on the Tube recently — and they did," she says proudly. "When I was younger the worst you saw was fistcuffs. Now the kids carry knives."

Ena is fortunate to be a resident on the safest road in the country. "I live on the same street as Jack Straw. There is a policeman posted permanently outside his front door."



Police sign in Kennington

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'Hospital misled us on baby treatment'

Peter Foster and Ian Murray reports on parents who deny giving consent

SIX mothers who say that they unwittingly allowed their children to become guinea-pigs in an experimental treatment for ventilating premature babies are threatening to sue an NHS trust hospital.

The claims follow the announcement of a government inquiry into trials of a new ventilator system at the North Staffordshire Hospital in Stoke-on-Trent in 1989-93.

Of 122 babies who were treated, 43 died or suffered brain damage. The hospital said yesterday that all the parents of babies involved in the trials of the continuous negative extrathoracic pressure (CNEP) ventilators had signed consent forms for the treatment and had been fully informed about the trial through an information leaflet.

But several parents have come forward accusing the hospital of "fooling" them into taking part in the tests by obtaining consent without explaining the risks. The campaign for the families is being led by Carl and Debbie Henshall, whose daughter Sophie was born prematurely at the North Staffordshire Hospital in December 1992.

She was placed on a CNEP ventilator and was later diagnosed as suffering from brain damage and cerebral palsy. Yesterday, despite the assurances of the hospital, Mrs and Mrs Henshall maintained

they had not been told the treatment was experimental or part of a clinical trial.

"I didn't find out until my daughter was four years old that she was part of an experiment and I am extremely angry about that," Mrs Henshall, a former care worker, said at her home in Newcastle-under-Lyme yesterday.

Mrs Henshall, who is taking legal advice on compensation, added that staff at the hospital had highlighted the potential benefits of the CNEP system without saying that it was on trial. She said that in February 1992, when she had another premature baby, Stacy, her husband Carl was pushed into giving consent for the CNEP ventilator. "They were giving him a horror story about how the traditional ventilator could cause narrowing

of the windpipe — collapsed lung and all sorts of other things. They said that this was a safer procedure which was proven to be effective. A clipboard was pushed under his nose. We didn't even read what he was signing — he just put his trust in the doctors."

The inquiry into the trials of the ventilators, which has been ordered by Baroness Hayman, the Health Minister, is expected to explore how consent was obtained from parents such as the Henshalls in the minutes after the birth of their very sick children.

Sharon Bradley, 30, also claimed yesterday that she had been "fooled" into taking part in the trials against her will. She gave birth to her premature son Stephen at the hospital in May 1993. Now aged five, he suffers from autism, se-

vere learning difficulties and poor communication skills.

Another couple, Lisa and Paul Breton, said they felt they had been "hoodwinked" into accepting the treatment when their son Joshua was born at the hospital in September 1991. Weighing 2lb 8oz, Joshua died from a brain haemorrhage a few hours after being moved to the CNEP system after he failed to respond to other treatments.

David Southall, 49, the consultant paediatrician at the hospital who led the trial using the new ventilators on premature babies, has spent two decades studying cot deaths, first at the Heart and Lung Institute at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London and, since 1992, as Professor of Paediatrics at Keele University.

At the Royal Brompton he published a highly acclaimed study proving that there was no link between cot death and apnoea, the tendency of babies to stop breathing for a short time. While there he began controversial work to discover why some mothers in hospital repeatedly reported their healthy babies had breathing problems.

With police help he set up video surveillance which clearly showed that some mothers were deliberately suffocating their babies in order to attract attention, a symptom of Munchausen's Disease by proxy.



John and Pauline Pickett after yesterday's ruling. They say they will have to remortgage their home to pay legal bills

Judge rules against couple who 'lost vasectomy gamble'

By PAUL WILKINSON

A FATHER of three girls who had two more daughters after having two vasectomies lost his claim yesterday for compensation from the hospital where he had the operations.

John Pickett and his wife Pauline, 41, lost the High

Court case even though the judge ruled that doctors were negligent in their advice about the efficacy of the surgery.

The couple, who did not receive legal aid, face a bill of tens of thousands of pounds for the action. Mr Pickett, 47, said they were "stunned and disappointed" by the decision.

The court, sitting in Leeds, was told that Mr Pickett, a computer engineer, was believed to be the first man in the world to have two "late-failure" vasectomies.

The couple, who also have an adopted son, had sued St James's University Hospital in Leeds, claiming that they were not warned of the risk of a second operation failing. They told the three-day hearing that if they had known that Mrs Pickett, now 41, could still become pregnant they would have used additional contraception. Judge

John Altman said that although he agreed that the hospital had been in breach of its duty by not warning them of possible failure, the couple had taken a gamble and lost.

"The reality is they knew of the risks," he said. "It was a human decision that, in effect, it couldn't happen to them twice. There was a negligent act but I also find that that negligent act made no difference whatsoever to their state of mind."

Mrs Pickett, a clinical psychologist, said they would have to remortgage their home in Roundhay, Leeds, to pay the legal bills. "We have six children to get through education — our savings have gone. This will be a burden for years." The Picketts' daughters are aged 14, 12, 11, 7 and 4. Their son is 9.

The court was told that Mr Pickett had a vasectomy in

May 1988 after the birth of their third daughter because his wife did not want another pregnancy and they were in the process of adopting their son. Early tests showed the vasectomy had been successful, but in March 1991 Mrs Pickett found that she was pregnant and had a daughter.

Mr Pickett had a second vasectomy in February 1992. The couple said that, although they were warned of the 3,000-to-one risks of a failed vasectomy the first time, they were not told that there was the same chance of the vasectomy failing again. Two years later Mrs Pickett became pregnant again and gave birth to their fifth daughter.

Outside court, Mr Pickett said: "I regret bringing the court case because it has left us in debt, but I feel we have made our point. We have explained to the children that we were not using because we didn't love them."

CJD drug quest stepped up

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

RESEARCH on drugs that might prevent the development of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is to be stepped up after an expert government committee called for them to be given high priority.

Experiments on rats have shown that pentosan polysulphate, a drug developed to treat cystitis, can delay the

development of the disease. However, it does not work unless it is given before clinical symptoms appear.

The Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee accepts that the drug, or similar ones, might be effective at preventing new variant CJD — the variety believed to be caused by infected beef — but

that at present its widespread use could not be justified.

Professor Sir John Pattison, chairman of the committee, says that there are too many uncertainties. "We believe that further research needs to be done, both into this drug and others. If an efficacious compound was found, then its use might be justified."

Volcano islanders 'risk lung disease'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PEOPLE exposed to dust from the Montserrat volcano may be at long-term risk of developing the miners' disease silicosis, according to a team of British scientists.

Ash from the Soufriere Hills volcano, which has been erupting since 1995, contains high levels of cristobalite, says a report in *Science*.

Small particles less than 10 thousands of a centimetre across — and therefore small enough to penetrate the smallest air passages in the lungs — contain between 10 and 24 per cent silica, which is much higher than in the ash examined after other volcanic eruptions.

When inhaled over long periods of time, cristobalite can cause silicosis, a thickening and scarring of the lung tissues which prevents the lungs providing enough oxygen to the blood.

The team, led by Dr Peter Baxter of the University of Cambridge, says that dust levels on the Caribbean island are worst wherever there is human activity: in school playgrounds, car parks, busy roads, supermarkets, and inside houses when they are being swept.

There is "a potential health threat from long-term exposure" to the ash, the team says, although it is too soon to observe any cases yet. The hazard is much greater during long-term eruptions such as Soufriere Hills, where ash is falling for many months or years.

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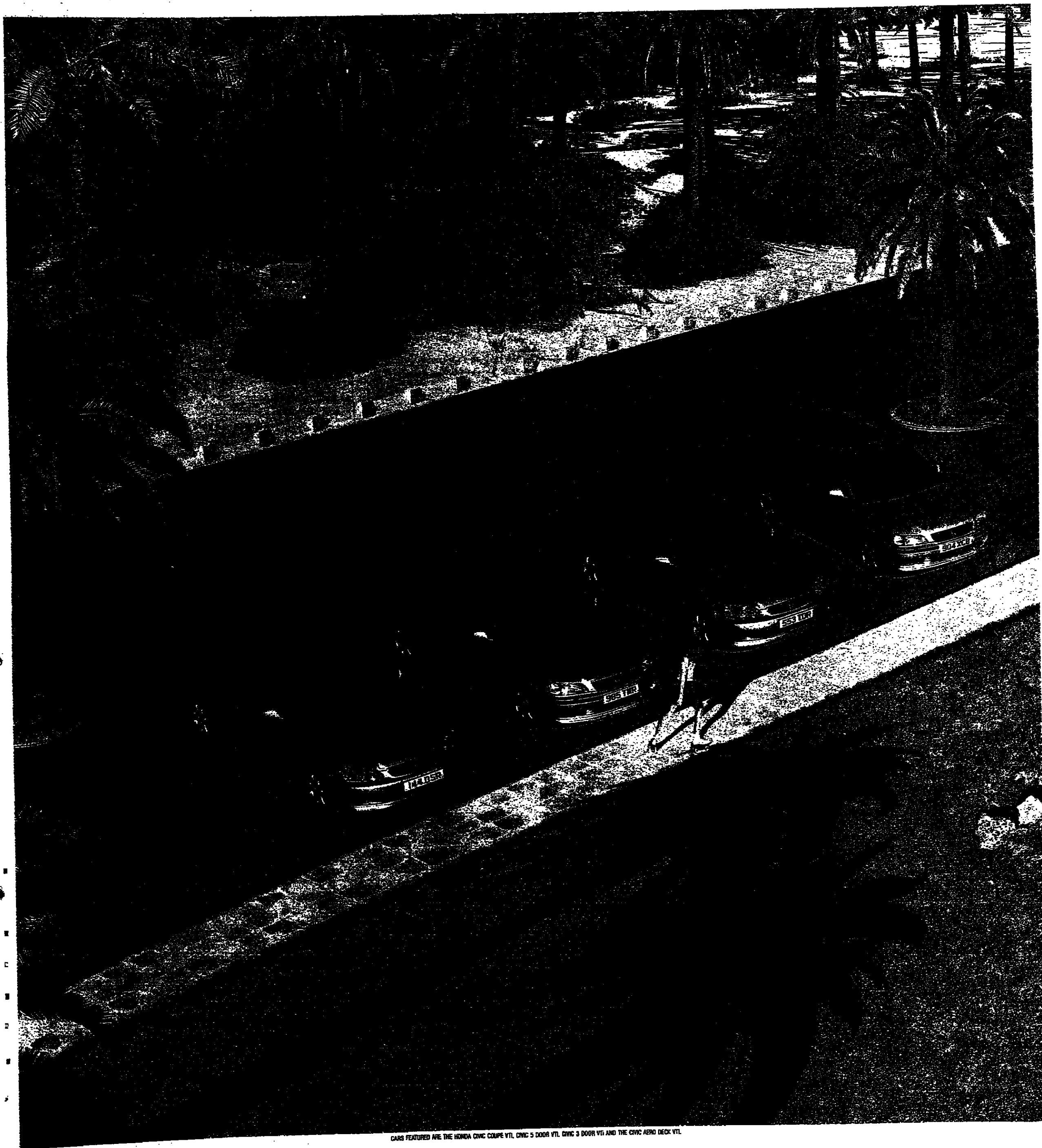
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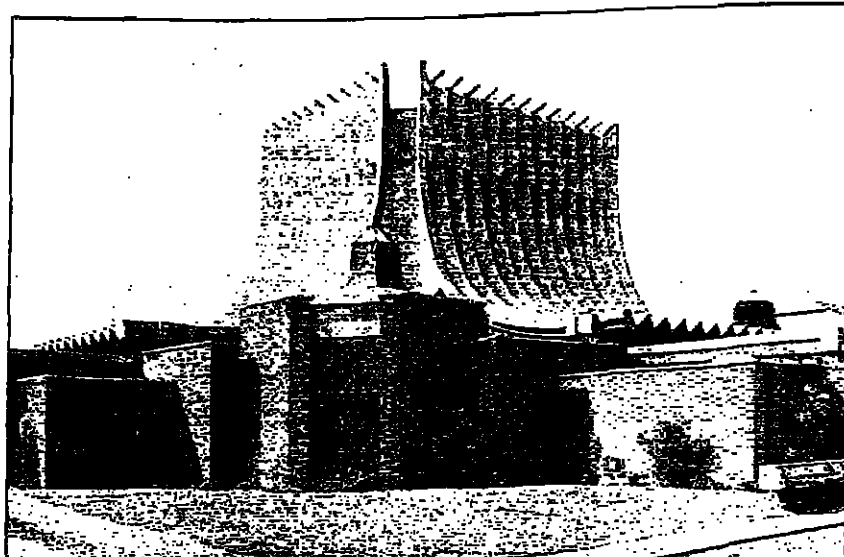
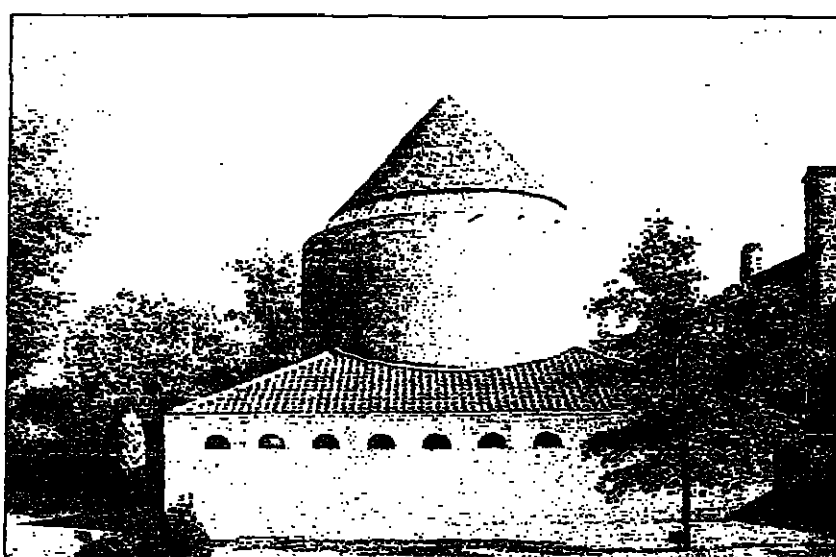
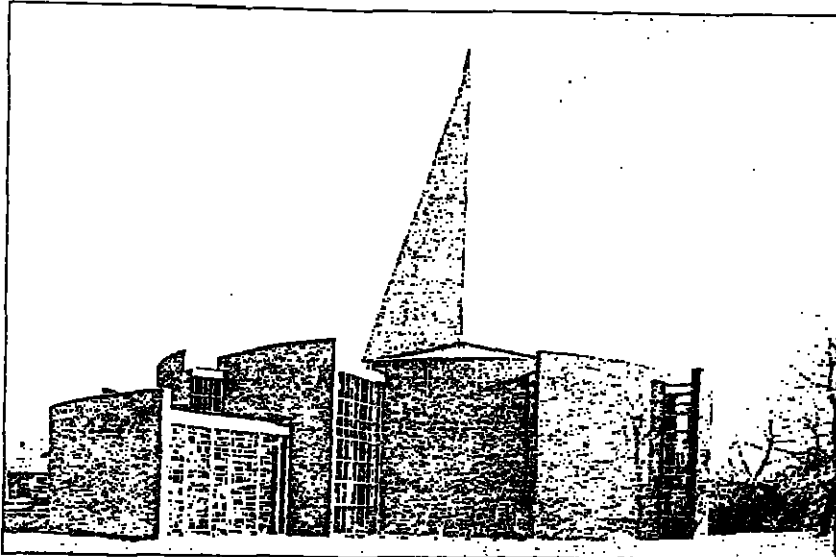
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Worthy of praise: St Peter's in the parish of Greenhill, Sheffield; the Anglican convent church at West Malling, Kent, where the font is a firkin vat; and Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic church in Birmingham

Modern church buildings make the grade

Creations in concrete and steel are now recognised as outstanding architecture, writes Ruth Gledhill

A CONCRETE convent church and a parish church with stainless steel fittings are among modern buildings that have been listed as architectural gems.

The Culture Department yesterday announced Grade II status for them. West Malling Abbey, an Anglican Benedictine convent in Kent, has a church rebuilt in 1966 with concrete block walls, reinforced concrete beams and nuns' stalls made of blackboard. The church, which

sits between buildings of medieval ragstone, is lit by hanging glass spheres. The font is a firkin vat set in concrete.

Among its admirers is *Concrete Quarterly*, which referred to a "skilful use of modern materials" linked to 11th century buildings "without any apparent discordant note". The abbey was founded in 1090 by Gun-

dulf, Bishop of Rochester, and the church incorporates a Grade I medieval west front and transept.

The building is one of three 1960s churches that were recommended for Grade II listing by English Heritage. Another is St Peter's in Greenhill, Sheffield, which includes a Communion rail of stainless steel and wood, and a stainless steel

cross suspended over a grey marble altar.

Also listed is the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady Help of Christians in Tile Cross, Birmingham, built in 1967 by Richard Gilbert Scott, a scion of the architectural dynasty founded in the Victorian era by Sir George Gilbert Scott, designer of St Pancras Station and the For-

eign Office. Peter Smith, listings inspector for English Heritage, admitted that some people might not consider all the churches to be beautiful. "They are not as ugly as some of the postwar buildings we have looked at," he said.

"If you accept that we list buildings of any sort, then it is very hard to know why we would not list mod-

ern ones as well as old ones. They are the finest pieces of design, and every effort must be made to protect them."

Other buildings considered attractive now might not be thought so in the future, he said. "In the 1960s, Victorian buildings such as St Pancras Station were considered very ugly. Now we think of them as

great architecture. There are already some people who think of modern, 1960s buildings as very beautiful. It's a matter of taste."

The Rev Lawrence Jenkins, the vicar of St Peter's, admitted having been surprised to discover last year that his church had been nominated. "It is a remarkable new building," he said. "It is also very attractive, more so from the inside than the outside. It has a numinous quality about it."

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Detective inspector charged with theft

By PAUL WILKINSON

A SENIOR detective who briefed the Prime Minister on "zero tolerance" policing was last night charged with theft from his own station.

Detective Inspector Russ Daglish, a police officer for 20 years, showed Tony Blair around Middlesbrough police station the day before the general election in 1997.

Mr Daglish, 39, and Detective Constable Brendon Whitehead, 34, who also met the Blair party, are accused of the theft of items from the station's stolen property store. Mr Daglish has also been charged with two counts of handling stolen goods. It is alleged that two central heating boilers, recovered as stolen property, were removed from the station days before Mr Blair's visit. One was allegedly fitted at Mr Daglish's home, a 17th-century cottage in Eggleston, Stockton-on-Tees, that he shares with his partner, Sally Ann Knowles, a lawyer with the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Whitehead had been suspended since soon after fellow officers began investigating the case in December 1997. The officers have been bailed to appear before magistrates next month.

Balloon crew have to hang around

By HELEN RUMBELOW

THE British round-the-world balloon attempt was proceeding rather slowly yesterday, as Andy Elson and Colin Prescott drifted at a speed not much more than that of the Moroccan children running delightfully along below them.

Mr Elson, 45, and Mr Prescott, 48, were meandering south at 10mph and 16,000ft, using the west coast of Africa as a "waiting room" for a few days before they can catch the right winds. Were they to ascend now they would be surfing a jetstream that would take them straight into China, which has forbidden entry to British-registered balloons. By this morning they expect to have passed the Sahara and to have covered 750 of their projected 18,000 miles.

Mr Elson, from Somerset, used the time to fix a leaking hatch on the *Cable and Wireless* balloon, which he designed and built. His last attempt was in the *Breitling Orbiter*, which ran out of fuel while waiting for permission to fly over China.

"The first 24 hours are critical and we have had a good flight so far," Mr Elson said. "We're relaxed and enjoying the splendid African views."

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School builders rewarded with tribal honours

FIVE builders from Somerset have been made elders of an East African tribe after spending their holiday putting up a classroom in a remote village.

Mark Orchard and his team worked for two weeks without pay to complete the primary school in Kenya. Their reward was to be given Swahili names and appointed elders of the million-strong Giriama tribe at a ceremony performed in traditional costume in front of 5,000 people.

Mr Orchard, 32, is no longer known as Guvnor back in Weston-super-Mare — he is now Ngumbad, or the Hero. Andy Difford, the bricklayer, has become Kadenge, the Quick One. Dave Rayner, the decorator, is Nguma, the Smiler, and Chris Fisher, the plasterer, is Chadli, the One of Many Works. Their veteran colleague, Reg Daniels, 66, could call himself Tsawekadzonagao — the Wise Elder —

Volunteers who helped Kenyan village now go by Swahili names, reports Simon de Bruxelles

except that few people can pronounce it. Mr Orchard was also presented with a ceremonial wand carved with an elephant and two lions, which gives him the power to vote on tribal issues at elders' meetings.

After his return home yesterday, he said: "It was an incredible honour and very humbling. We were told this is the first time white men or foreigners have been made elders." The ceremony was

carried out by the village medicine man in Swahili. "It was very emotional and we all had lumps in our throats," Mr Orchard said. "A couple of the lads were close to tears and they are big burly builders. Afterwards, nobody called us our English names. Waiters, taxi drivers, teachers and schoolchildren all knew us by our Swahili names."

Mr Orchard first learnt of the plight of the school in the poverty-stricken village of Wazumu when he was on holiday in Kenya last year. Villagers had spent ten years scraping together enough money to pay for building materials for the classroom. At that rate it was going to take them six more years to raise enough to pay a local labourer £1 a day to construct it.

Mr Orchard, who normally charges £60 a day, offered to do the job for nothing and recruited four volunteers from



Out of Africa: left to right, Mark Orchard, named Ngumbad in Swahili, with Reg Daniels, Dave Rayner, Andy Difford and Chris Fisher

his firm, Clayton Construction, to help. He persuaded his builders' merchant to sponsor the trip and negotiated cheap fares with an airline.

"I got back to England and asked if anyone would be interested in doing two weeks

unpaid work in Kenya. They all jumped at it and within three hours we had talked the airline into giving us flights at cost price, and persuaded some of our suppliers to pay for the fares."

The team worked from 5am

to 8pm each day to finish the job in two weeks. They were watched by hundreds of curious onlookers, fascinated by the sight of white men doing manual labour. "They had never seen white people working. White people had always

told them to work," Mr Orchard said. "Each day more and more people would come to watch: some days there would be 2,000 there."

"We had to work with coral blocks, which were nothing like any stone we had worked

with before. There was no water or electricity and one of the lads passed out with sunstroke. The working conditions were difficult and we are knackered, but it was incredibly satisfying doing something to help."

Gang murder informer fails to halt TV film

By PETER GLEESON

A DOCUMENTARY on a gangland triple execution is due to be broadcast next month after a judge yesterday rejected an informer's claim that the programme could help bounty hunters to track him down.

Mr Justice Morland dismissed an injunction aimed at stopping the screening of *Inside Story: Supergrass*, which focuses on the so-called Essex Range Rover murders and is scheduled for March 2.

The injunction was brought by the "supergang", Darren Nicholls, 33, who claims he has a £500,000 bounty on his head after giving evidence against fellow gang members. He was concerned that interviews he gave to the BBC about the 1995 murders might help gangland executioners to track him down.

Mr Justice Morland, at the High Court, said trailers for the programme and newspaper reports about it could already have been seen by Nicholls's enemies. "I have reached the clear conclusion that there would be no significant extra risk to the plaintiff by the broadcast."

Essex police supported Nich-

olls, arguing that his appearance would further jeopardise his own and his family's safety. They said that they had not taken part in the documentary, adding that people in witness protection programmes should not draw extra attention to themselves.

Nicholls' evidence to the Old Bailey was crucial in convicting Michael Steele and Jack Whomes, jailed for life for the execution of rival drug dealers Pat Tate, 37, Tony Tucker, 38, and Craig Rolfe, 26.

He drove the getaway car after Steele, 55, and Whomes, 37, hired their three rivals to an isolated field near Basildon, Essex, after promising them a share in a cocaine drop. When the three men arrived in a Range Rover they were blasted to death with a shotgun. For his damning evidence, Nicholls did not go to prison. He now lives under a new identity and gets welfare benefits of £48 a week.

Nicholls's lawyers argued that a locality in the film might be recognised, giving him a better idea of his new address. The BBC argued that footage had been filmed "many miles from his new home".

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Surge in live kidney donations saves 68 extra lives

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE number of live kidney donors in Britain grew by an unprecedented 38 per cent last year. The unexpected increase enabled 241 patients to be given a kidney from a living donor, compared with 173 the year before.

About 15 per cent of kidney transplants in Britain are now provided by living donors, although the level is only half that in Scandinavia and the United States.

Sir Peter Morris, who chaired a recent Royal College of Surgeons of England working party on organ transplantation, said: "We have not carried out any publicity campaign for living donors and the main reason I can think of for the sudden increase is that the public have at last become aware that live donation is possible."

"There has also been a change of attitude by a number of surgeons in this country who were against the idea in the past."

Sir Peter, who is Nuffield Professor of Surgery at Oxford University, said he hoped that donations from live donors in Britain would eventually provide at least 25 per cent of the kidneys needed.

The shortage of organs means that kidney patients usually have to spend many months on dialysis, waiting for a transplant.

Those with blood group A wait an average of ten months, those with blood group O wait 14 months and those with blood group B for 16 months. Most living donors are parents who want to spare their child a long and traumatic period of dialysis.

The operation to remove the kidney takes about two hours and a further three hours is needed to transplant it into the recipient.

Donor and recipient are usually well enough to leave hospital within a fortnight and the donor is generally able to resume a normal life soon afterwards.

"The risks are very low for the donor, although it is a major operation," Sir Peter said.

"In about 2 per cent of cases there can be serious complications, such as haemorrhaging, infection or deep-vein thrombosis. Worldwide there is said to be a 0.03 per cent risk of death, although I know of no case in Britain where a donor has died."

Organs donated from living donors are always better than those taken from someone who has died because they are undamaged, he said. Even kidneys exchanged between a husband and wife who are physically unmatched work as well as, or better than, a matched organ taken from a dead person.

The increase in live donors was reported as *The Lancet* published a report of the world's first successful joint kidney and liver transplant from a living donor.

The operation to give a 53-year-old man the kidney and right liver lobe from his 26-year-old son was carried out in São Paulo, Brazil. The son was discharged from hospital within ten days and recovered fully. The father was discharged after 18 days and was soon able to start part-time work.

Although delighted with the outcome of the operation, Wagner Marujo, who led the transplant team at the Israelita Albert Einstein Hospital, gave a warning that the ethical issues of the limits of living organ donation are far from clear.

The operation raises many questions about what should be regarded as an acceptable risk to a donor, he says, and the operation could be open to criticism. "These procedures should only be attempted as a last remedy by teams with extensive experience," he said.

"However, what seems extreme today may become an ordinary therapeutic tool tomorrow."



Katsuki Yuzawa and two other college students get to grips with their training. He plans to return to Japan when he graduates in October

Japanese happy to be the odd man out

By CLAUDIA JOSEPH

THE Norland College, which has trained nannies for the Princess Royal, the Duchess of York and Mick Jagger, has broken with 100 years of tradition to take its first male student.

Katsuki Yuzawa has swapped life in Japan, where he has spent the past four years working at his parents' private nursery, for starched uniforms and Silver Cross prams. He is taking a one-year postgraduate diploma course for international students at the college, near Hungerford in Berkshire, and plans to return to Japan when he graduates in October.

Mr Yuzawa, 22, who comes from Tochigi, said: "I am here because I like children and I like this job taking care of children." He applied for a place after his mother spotted the course while on a tour of training centres in England. He pays £3,600 a term for tuition, board and lodging. But while the other nannies wear brown dresses, hard hats and long brown coats, he sports a navy blazer, burgundy tie and grey flannel trousers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Libel win for Diana's bodyguard

One of the former bodyguards to the late Diana, Princess of Wales, accepted undisclosed High Court libel damages and an unreserved apology over a newspaper article that wrongly said he had been "carpeted" over a break-in at Kensington Palace. Inspector Peter Brown, who was one of the Princess's personal protection officers until 1994, had brought the proceedings over an article that appeared in *The Mirror* in April 1997.

Tarantula rescue

Firefighters broke into a burning flat to save a pet tarantula, only to emerge with a toy spider. They went back inside the home in Salford and found Harry, a Chilean rose tarantula, alive and well in its glass tank.

OBE mystery

A charity shop is trying to trace the owner of an OBE insignia it believes was handed in by mistake. The insignia was discovered in its case inside a bag of clothing that was donated to the Age Concern shop in Ipswich.

Geldof victory

The musician Bob Geldof won a public apology and "substantial" undisclosed libel damages at the High Court in London after *The Sun* accepted that he had not fondled or groped a Soho stripper.

Wedding bells

A bride and groom took ice-cream vans — with chimes playing the *Bridal March* — to their wedding in Fownhope, Herefordshire. Claire Cottrell said her husband, Scott Morrall, "loves his work" with an ice-cream firm.

Air bags boom may harm hearing

By IAN MURRAY

AIR BAGS in cars save lives but can cause tinnitus and deafness, researchers say. The loud noise generated as the bags inflate has been blamed for the hearing loss.

Inflation of the air bag creates a sound of up to 170 decibels for 0.1 of a second, according to the study led by Graham Buckley, from St James's University Hospital, Leeds, with the help of the Vehicle Safety Research Centre at Loughborough.

Tests using squirrel monkeys found that this noise level did not cause permanent hearing damage or ear-drum perforation. However, the researchers say in the *British Medical Journal* today that the effect on human beings is likely to be more serious, causing acoustic trauma.

In two cases where air bags inflated in low-speed accidents — one at 15mph and the other at 20mph — the researchers found that the drivers suffered hearing loss and tinnitus. They said that there was also a strong possibility of cochlear damage.

The authors say it is surprising that hearing loss is not reported more frequently after air-bag inflation, although this may be because of other factors associated with accidents. The level of the noise in the vehicle depends on the number of occupants, ventilation, size and the number of air bags.

Safety design is moving towards fitting vehicles with air bags that inflate in frontal and side crashes for both the driver and the front-seat passenger. The report says that lack of space means the side bags inflate close to the ear. More ear injuries from air bags are therefore likely in the future, the researchers say.



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- 1 JULY 1998**
Ten arson attacks on Roman Catholic churches in four counties. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 2 SEPTEMBER 8**
Bomb kills RUC Constable Frankie O'Reilly in Portadown. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 3 OCTOBER 30**
Gunmen spray Farmers Inn in Colin Glen. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 4 OCTOBER 31**
Gunmen kill Brian Service, 35, Roman Catholic, who walked home through North Belfast. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 5 DECEMBER 16**
Grenade attack on McKenna's Bar in Crumlin. Red Hand Defenders and Orange Volunteers claim responsibility.
- 6 JANUARY 7, 1999**
Explosion outside Gaelic sports club, injuring a workman. Orange Volunteers claim responsibility.
- 7 JANUARY 15**
Device explodes outside home of Catholic, former Patrick Shields near Loughisland. Orange Volunteers claim responsibility.
- 8 JANUARY 23**
Same device thrown at two Catholic homes in Lerne.
- 9 JANUARY 25**
Pipe bomb found by car of Catholic, Seamus Mullen, who lives on mainly Protestant estate in Greenisland. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 10 JANUARY 29**
Lank pipe bomb attack on the home of the Catholic Quinn family in Dunganon. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 11 FEBRUARY 1**
Device thrown at group standing outside St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Antrim. Red Hand Defenders claim responsibility.
- 12 FEBRUARY 8**
Pipe bomb thrown at the Catholic-owned White Horse Inn near Crumlin. Orange Volunteers claim responsibility.
- 13 FEBRUARY 8**
Grenade thrown at McVilly's bar, owned by a former Sinn Féin councillor in Castlecauswell. Orange Volunteers claim responsibility.



Extremist few strive to keep the hatred alive

CHRISIE QUINN and Mary Quinn share more than a surname. Both are Roman Catholics. Both have had their homes attacked by loyalist extremists in the middle of the night while their children slept upstairs.

The difference is that while Chrissie Quinn's three boys were burnt alive in Ballymoney last July, Mary Quinn's four children escaped when the pipe bomb thrown at their Dunganon home a few days ago failed to explode.

"We all could have been killed," said Mary Quinn, who was dozing in her living room when the 9in-long bomb smashed through her kitchen window at 1am. She telephoned the police and rushed upstairs to get her children, aged between 5 and 11.

Peace is a relative term in Northern Ireland. There have been no big bombs since Omagh last August. The IRA and some of its loyalist counterparts have halted, at least

Martin Fletcher reports on the last-ditch terror campaign by a handful of loyalist bigots

temporarily, their punishment shootings and beatings. But no peace accord or Stormont assembly can simply legislate away 30 years of sectarian hatred, and a tiny number of extreme loyalist bigots are still seeking to terrorise the Province's Catholics.

In recent months the self-styled Orange Volunteers and the Red Hand Defenders have between them attacked more than 20 Catholic churches, bars and homes in five of Northern Ireland's six counties. They have killed a police-

man in Portadown and a young man who was walking home through North Belfast late one night, and it is only a matter of time before one of their crude devices causes the sort of carnage that destroyed Chrissie Quinn's family.

Only last week nine people escaped when a grenade thrown at a bar in Co Londonderry bounced off the reinforced glass window and exploded.

"You can have several dead, or scorch marks on the outside of a wall. It's as hit or miss as that," said a senior security source, who expected the attacks to increase before the scheduled establishment of Northern Ireland's new power-sharing executive next month.

Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC Chief Constable, describes these overlapping groups as a "loose collection of the lowest common denominator of terrorists and criminals on the so-called loyalist side of life". Their attacks are designed specifically "to unnerve others, to bring about a reaction and to attack the peace process", and "they pose a very real threat".

The police are working to build their intelligence on the groups but security sources called them a "rag, tag and bobtail army" of perhaps two or three dozen people. They said it was "extremely difficult to tie down who's who and what's what... We're talking about very small numbers of very nasty people."

There is evidence that a self-styled Protestant fundamentalist clergyman from Belfast is behind the Orange Volunteers. They appear to have access to arms and grenades imported from South Africa by the Ulster Resistance move-



Mary Quinn after the attack on her Dunganon home and, right, Chrissie Quinn, whose boys were killed in Ballymoney



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A pipe bomb of the type thrown into the Quinns' kitchen



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KURDISH CRISIS: MINISTERS PAY THE PRICE

Cabinet is purged in Greece as public applauds

Pro-Kurdish feeling in the country claims its first scapegoats for a fiasco, writes John Carr in Athens

IN A dramatic sequel to two days of intense national controversy over Greece's role in the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish guerrilla chief, Theodoros Pangalos, the Foreign Minister, and two other Cabinet ministers were dismissed yesterday.

The sackings were a desperate move by Costas Simitis, the Prime Minister, to halt a nosedive in the popularity of his Socialist Government in the face of overwhelmingly pro-Kurdish sentiment here. For months, Mr Simitis's Government has been heavily criticised as weak in the face of per-

ceived Turkish pressures and as too ready to bow to Brussels and Washington.

Mr Simitis moved quickly to replace Mr Pangalos with George Papandreu, his deputy, whose soft-spoken style often helped to smooth feathery, whose soft-spoken style often helped to smooth feathery, whose soft-spoken style often helped to smooth feathery.

A son of the Socialist Party founder, the late Andreas Papandreu, he is respected in European capitals and the US. However, a national convention of the Socialist Party, in which Mr Simitis's leadership could well come under challenge, is only a month away.

Alexandros Papadopoulos.

the Minister for the Interior, and Philippos Petralimakis, the Public Order Minister, were also dismissed over the Government's mishandling of the Ocalan affair.

Mr Pangalos, apparently caught by surprise by his dismissal, had scheduled a meeting with a Slovak visitor, only to have to cut it short to announce his departure. "You will judge whether our handling was the best possible," he told reporters in a rueful jab at the media's mounting criticism of him and his vigorously pro-Kurdish tone.

Mr Pangalos blamed pro-

Kurdish elements in and out of the administration for "a crime against the country" — bringing Mr Ocalan secretly to Greece on at least two occasions in the past month and entangling the Government in the affair. On Tuesday, Mr Pangalos had been forced to disclose Greece's secret sheltering of Mr Ocalan at the Greek Embassy in Nairobi.

The response to his dismissal was electric. "Good riddance to the man!" shouted one worker in a government office. She rushed from the room to tell her colleagues. Outside, people gathered

around car radios to catch the bulletins, many applauding. The reason for the sacking of Mr Papadopoulos and Mr Petralimakis was less clear.

Mr Papadopoulos, bewildered and indignant, claimed to have been kept totally in the dark about Mr Ocalan's stay under secret Greek diplomatic protection. However, his ministry is in charge of the intelligence service, whose agents appear to have been critically involved in all stages of Mr Ocalan's link with Greece.

Sources close to the service told Greek television that one of its officers was emotionally

attached to the Kurdish cause and was at Mr Ocalan's side in Kenya on orders from the agency's chiefs.

Mr Petralimakis, who had been Public Order Minister for only three months, said he had been given no information about Mr Ocalan's movements in Greece and Kenya. He implicitly accused the intelligence service of having acted independently of any state authority in admitting Mr Ocalan to Greece briefly last month. His remarks raised the possibility that there is a faction inside the service which has enough influence to

affect the conduct of Greece's foreign policy.

A surprise appointment in the reshuffle was that of the Minister for Culture, Evangelos Venizelos, who has agitated for the return of the Elgin Marbles, to the Development Ministry. Mr Venizelos replaced Vasso Papandreu, who took over the Ministry of the Interior.

□ Nairobi: President Moi of Kenya sacked the heads of the police force, the Criminal Investigations Department and the Immigration Service in the wake of the abduction here of Mr Ocalan. (AFP)



The Kurdish protesters who had occupied the Greek Embassy in London acknowledge supporters as they are driven away in coaches after surrendering to police yesterday



Papandreu: soft-spoken new Foreign Minister

German police arrest protesters

FROM TONY PATERSON IN BERLIN

POLICE arrested hundreds of Kurdish protesters in towns and cities across Germany yesterday as violent demonstrations over Turkey's capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, swept the country for the third successive day.

In an attempt to tighten security after Wednesday's disastrous incident at the Berlin Israeli consulate in which three Kurds were shot dead by Israeli security guards, German police were put on a state of high alert throughout the country's 16 federal states.

Police detained hundreds of militant supporters of the banned Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) in Berlin, Wiesbaden, Bremen, Heilbronn, Chemnitz and Stuttgart. The worst violence occurred in Wiesbaden where police used water cannon and baton charges in clashes with some 300 PKK supporters to forcibly end their occupation of the Hessen state interior ministry grounds. Thirteen protesters were subsequently arrested.

In Berlin more than 200 Kurds defied a ban on political demonstrations and tried to stage a silent march to mourn the deaths of the three Kurds, but were thwarted by hundreds of riot police.

Israel steps up security abroad after killings

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

SCORES of extra Israeli security guards have been flown to diplomatic missions and institutions abroad in anticipation of attacks to avenge Wednesday's killing of three Kurds who stormed the Israeli consulate in Berlin.

Offices and flights of the national airline, El Al, are regarded as particularly likely targets and there are fears that Kurds may carry out aircraft hijackings.

A spokesman for the Kurdish underground, Ahmad Yaman, told the biggest-selling Tel Aviv newspaper *Yediot Aharanot*: "From now on, Israel has become the chief target for terror attacks by the Kurdish rebels, because of the massacre it perpetrated on the Kurds in the consulate in Berlin."

Mr Yaman, speaking at Kurdish offices in Rome, announced that the underground's military wing would strike at Israeli targets "not in Europe, but rather in Turkey and in the Middle East". He attacked the assistance he claimed Israel extended to Turkey in its battle against the Kurds and called relations between the two states "dirty".

Mr Yaman said: "The Jewish nation has suffered more than any other nation on Earth, so how is it possible

that you do not understand our suffering?" The paper also quoted one of the Kurds who had been occupying the Greek Embassy in London as saying: "The shooting of women and children was a big mistake for Israel. We will take vengeance on you. How is it that you killed our people? From now on, you are our enemy."

The Kurdish spokesman added: "Now see what is going to happen. We are not the poor Palestinians who do not know how to get organised. We are organised, and your army is going to pay the price."

Ronni Shaked, a former agent for Israel's Shin Bet, the equivalent of MI5, said in the same paper that while opening fire on the Kurds in Berlin may have halted the attack in Germany — justified by Bin-yamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, as an act of "self defence" — the deaths could end up costing Israeli lives.

"The PKK is going to look for revenge," Mr Shaked predicted. He said a likely target could be Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, where the PKK has training camps and works closely with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah (Party of God). Israel's Channel 2 TV said the Israeli Army, fearing such an attack, was on high alert in southern Lebanon.

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KURDISH CRISIS: TURKEY CRACKS DOWN

Ankara rounds up
Kurdish dissidents

TURKEY promised yesterday to give Abdullah Ocalan, the captured Kurd leader, a fair trial despite international misgivings about Turkey's human rights record.

But as Ankara issued its assurances, police cracked down on Kurd dissidents, imprisoning hundreds of activists while at the same time launching an attack on Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Turkey "would not tolerate any foreign interference in the trial of Mr Ocalan, who was captured by Turkish special forces in Nairobi on Monday and brought to Turkey on Tuesday. He is being held in isolation on the prison island of Imrali, where according to some reports the trial may be held."

"Everyone should respect the independence of the Turkish judiciary," the Foreign Ministry statement said.

Ismail Cem, the Foreign Minister, said during a visit to Prague that Turkey had "as developed a legal system as any other Western country."

Asked to comment on an appeal lodged by Mr Ocalan with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, asking for emergency measures to protect him from torture, Mr Cem said: "I do not understand what more can be done."

He added: "What we have here is a legal matter and our independent judiciary will deal with it."

Turkey insists that the captured rebel leader will get a fair trial, writes Richard Owen in Ankara

Mr Ocalan is to be tried on treason charges, which carry a possible death sentence, although nobody has been executed since 1984. Turkey regards Mr Ocalan and his Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as responsible for the deaths of nearly 30,000 people during a 14-year-old Kurdish insurgency in southeastern Turkey.

Turkish newspapers yesterday were almost entirely devoted to the capture of Mr Ocalan, who first took refuge in Italy last November but left Rome in the middle of last month and had been a fugitive ever since.

The front page of the newspaper *Milliyet* consisted of a large photograph of Mr Ocalan in handcuffs on the plane that brought him back to Turkey, guarded by a young special forces commando in a black balaclava under a head-

line consisting of the single word "Finished".

Police yesterday arrested more than 350 supporters of the main legal Kurdish party during raids in Istanbul and towns in southeast Turkey, according to the Human Rights Association. "We do not have an exact tally," a spokesman said. "Television showed further footage from a video taken by intelligence of Mr Ocalan in captivity on the plane, in a move apparently designed to demoralise his followers."

The Council of Europe said that it hoped to send a delegation to Turkey to "assess the conditions under which Abdullah Ocalan is being held". Lord Russell-Johnson, head of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, said that, provided the Turkish authorities co-operated, the delegation would seek assurances

that Mr Ocalan was in good health. Although Turkish membership of the European Union has long been delayed because of doubts about its human rights record, it is a full Council of Europe member.

Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, said Italy was "worried that Ocalan may not have a fair trial". He recalled that Italy had refused to hand Mr Ocalan to Turkey last November when the Kurdish leader arrived in Rome because the death penalty is in force in Turkey. Mr Ocalan's request for asylum in Italy was still being processed when he left the country last month.

Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish Prime Minister, said that the trial of Mr Ocalan, which is likely to be held within the next 10 to 12 days, would be "very free and very just because justice is very free and autonomous in Turkey".

Defence lawyers from Italy and The Netherlands claiming to represent Mr Ocalan have been denied entry to Turkey. Mr Ecevit said that the lawyers wanted to inspect Turkey's system of justice when in fact they have no right to have any doubts about it.

Mr Ocalan's brother Osman, urged Kurdish activists to "burn the enemy" and step up the protests on Turkish soil against Abdullah Ocalan's capture and impending trial.

Simon Jenkins, page 22
Leading article, page 23



Abdullah Ocalan is put on display before facing interrogation yesterday

Military
steps up
air raids
on rebels

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE EDITOR

THOUSANDS of Turkish troops, backed by helicopters and aircraft, continued attacks on Kurdish rebel positions in northern Iraq yesterday.

Although Ankara denied that the military operation in pursuit of PKK rebels was linked to the seizure of their leader, Abdullah Ocalan, it underlined the Government's apparent determination to cause maximum disruption to the Kurdish cause.

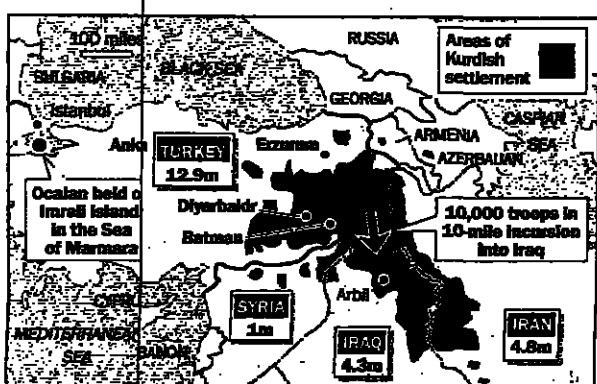
Up to 4,000 soldiers attacked PKK bases in the north-east corner of Iraq, where United Nations humanitarian agencies operate. Some reports suggested that 10,000 troops were involved.

The troops, who advanced at least nine miles into Iraq, were supported by US-made Cobra helicopter gunships and strike aircraft. The gunships fired on rebel positions in the Meina mountains.

A Turkish security official was quoted as saying: "The operation will continue until its aims have been met. The terrorists are in a state of panic."

Although Turkey has retained a semi-permanent force on the northern Iraqi side of the border since the 1991 Gulf War, the latest attack was said by Ankara to be in response to a PKK build-up. Last night the Anadolu news agency reported that PKK camps in northern Iraq were destroyed, forcing the rebels to flee to Iran.

Island jail is cleared so special forces can guard their lone prisoner



By RICHARD OWEN
AND ANDREW FINKEL

AN ENTIRE stretch of Turkish coastline was effectively shut down and deserted yesterday because of the presence in the area of one man: Abdullah Ocalan, the captured Kurdish leader who is being held on the island of Imrali, just over 30 miles south of Istanbul in the Sea of Marmara.

Tourist maps do not tend to make a feature of Imrali. They draw attention instead to the nearby Princes Islands, which are popular resorts

reached by ferry from Istanbul. On the four of the nine Princes Islands that are inhabited, cars are banned and horse-drawn carriages are used.

From a distance, Imrali appears equally picturesque, and even has a small harbour. But the quayside is now covered in armoured military and police vehicles. On closer inspection, Imrali is somewhat grimmer than the other islands and appears sparsely wooded and somewhat barren.

Imrali is an island prison, and according to Turkish authorities is an ideal place to hold the captured

Kurdish leader and ensure that no attempts are made to rescue him. The island normally houses some 250 prisoners, all of whom have been transferred elsewhere, leaving Mr Ocalan a lone inmate. He is being guarded by the kind of special forces who captured him in Kenya on Monday night, instead of the usual prison guards.

"Imrali will be a very secure place for him," Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish Prime Minister, said. Turkish naval vessels are patrolling the waters around the four square-mile island, and security has been stepped up in

Bandirma and Mudanya, the two coastal towns that face Imrali. All shops and cafes there have been closed.

Imrali became a Turkish possession in the 14th century, and had a sizeable Greek population until the 1930s when they were sent back to Greece in an exchange of minorities.

The island became a prison two years later. Prisoners on Imrali normally work on a farm, and its products are sold in Istanbul and other Turkish towns. Officials yesterday said it was most unlikely that Mr Ocalan would "engage in agricul-

ture" while he awaits trial. Until recently, Imrali was the "des-res" of the Turkish prisoner elite. It was from the "semi-open" prison that Yilmaz Guney escaped in 1982, when Turkey was under martial law, to collect his Palme d'Or in Cannes for his film, *Yol*.

Yol begins with a group of prisoners departing from Imrali on compassionate leave, only to discover a society less free than the island.

Mr Ocalan is unlikely to get that opportunity. The suggestion is that he will be tried in a court set up on the island.

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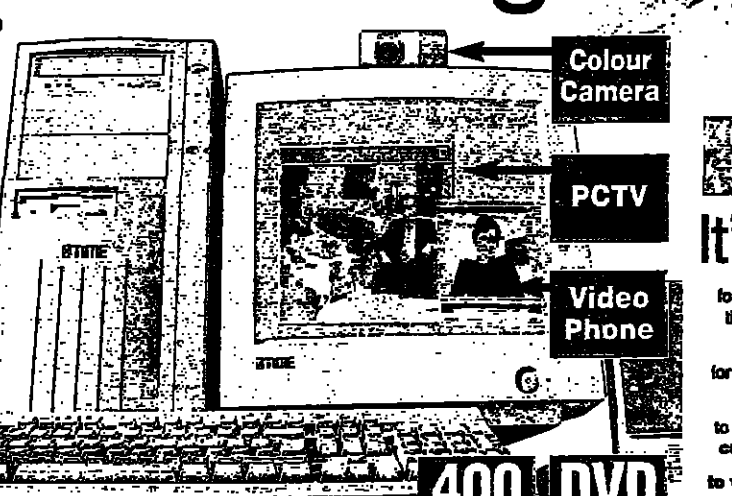
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Russians fly for both sides in Horn of Africa

TUCKED away at the far end of the airstrip at Mekele, the provincial capital of Tigre and northern command headquarters of the Ethiopian Air Force, a gleaming Russian-made Sukhoi 27 fighter-bomber stood on the concrete apron yesterday, ready for a sortie over the Ethiopian-Eritrean border.

It had landed the previous evening, along with five other Russian-built combat aircraft, rather elderly MiG 21s and MiG 23s, which were also dispersed around distant points of the airfield.

Even farther, hidden from prying eyes was the plane's crew. But away from the airstrip, in the bars and hotels of Mekele, the men can be found: Russians and Ukrainians, mainly, with a few Bulgarians, all working as technicians, advisers and instructors. It is an open secret that there are as many on the Eritrean side, where the 12 or so combat planes of the air force are understood to include five MiG 29s. Over the coming weeks, Russians could be shooting down Russians over the Horn of Africa.

The Russians have all been hired on private contracts with Russian companies, usually as part of a package including the supply of the planes, parts and maintenance — with no involvement by the Russian Government. The same would

Robin Lodge reports from Mekele on a new breed of mercenaries

apply to the Ukrainians and Bulgarians. "It takes quite a while to train a pilot to fly something as sophisticated as a Sukhoi 27 or MiG 29."

There are probably one or two Ethiopian pilots who have reached that standard by now, with about the same number among the Eritreans — but you cannot afford to take risks with planes as valuable as that, a military analyst said.

Even the experts are not immune. Last month a Sukhoi 27 crash-landed at the main Ethiopian airport at Debre Zeyit, 40 miles southeast of Addis

LINKS

<http://www.netAfrica.org/eritrean> — The Eritrean Government website.
<http://etonline.net/etonline.com/> — The Ethiopian Website.
<http://eritrean.org/> — Eritrean Network Information Center.
<http://www.africapolicy.org/> — New from the Africa Policy Information Center.

Ababa. The embarrassed pilot was a Russian ex-air force colonel. Since the collapse of Soviet power, pilots and other military experts from the former Soviet Union are turning up in scores all over Africa, from Angola to Sudan to Sierra Leone. Their scope for employment is assisted by the quantity of Soviet military hardware on the continent, dating from the time when Moscow was building up relations with new African states and national liberation movements and supplying military equipment at bargain-basement rates. With the cuts in Russia's armed forces, highly qualified military personnel found themselves without a job and have been eager to take up the opportunities that open up with every new African conflict.

Even among pilots kept on in the new Russian Air Force, poor living conditions and non-payment of wages has made life harder. Even worse, there are far fewer opportunities to fly, because of a lack of funds to buy fuel. Many top-level Russian fighter pilots say that they are no longer getting enough air time to keep their edge. For these men, the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict can only be good news, especially as neither side has risked committing its frontline combat aircraft to a confrontation.

Leading article, page 23



An Ethiopian family finds shelter by a cave on a mountain at Mbarekena after fleeing their home on the frontier with Eritrea as fighting rages on the eastern front. Both sides have kept their Russian-manned air forces ready for action

WORLD IN BRIEF

Mugabe reform offer spurned

Harare: An attempt by Zimbabwe's ruling Zai (PF) party to draft a new constitution under a process controlled by President Mugabe was rejected by the political and civic organisations asked to participate (Jan Raath writes). The three groups that account for political activity outside the Government said such a process could not produce a genuine constitution and gave a warning that unless Zai agreed to a transparent and independent mechanism, they would work to see that Zimbabweans "make their own constitution, in direct confrontation and in opposition to the Government".

Marriage upheal

Karachi: A Pakistani couple who were harassed and arrested after marrying against family wishes were finally married, the Lahore High Court ruled. Their lawyer, Ha Jilani, said: "This is a landmark judgement." Humaira al Mahmood Butt married in May 1997, but her family claimed she had married a cousin the month before and that Mahmood had kidnapped her. Police later dragged the couple away from Karachi airport as they tried to leave the country (Reuters).

Briton 'aiding rebels'

Monrovia: Eight people, including a Briton, an Australian and a Lebanese, have been arrested here for "collaborating" with Sierra Leone rebels. The suspects were arrested at the offices of a local company, Red Deer International, and included its general manager, Richard Ratcliffe. British national Joe Tate, the police chief, said military uniforms, communication equipment and sensitive documents were retrieved from the alleged collaborators with the rebels. (AFP)

Aids attacker jailed

Lafayette, Louisiana: Dr Richard Schmidt, right, who gave his lover the Aids virus by injecting her with infected blood, has received the maximum penalty — 50 years' hard labour — for attempted second-degree murder. Prosecutors said that he injected Janice Allen, a nurse, after she told him their ten-year relationship was over. (AP)



Bicycle boy 'framed'

Chicago: The family of one of two boys initially charged with killing an 11-year-old girl for her bicycle sued Chicago police for \$100 million (£61 million), saying detectives framed the boy. The boys, ages seven and eight, had been accused of beating Ryan Harris, suffocating her and molesting her. The suit filed by the eight-year-old's family claims detectives arrested the boy, interrogated him without his parent or a lawyer present, and intimidated him into a confession (AP).

Dr Richard Saunders

In a report, "Rhinos will pay price of Mugabe's seizures" (December 15, 1997), Dr Richard Saunders, scribed as a Harare-based Canadian economist, was quoted as saying: "The advice is simple, get your money out and then get yourself out before Mugabe grabs some other part of the economy." We now accept that Dr Saunders (who is a political scientist, not an economist) holds no such views and did not make that statement attributed to him. We apologise for the embarrassing caused.

Famine cuts North Korea population 'by two million'

FROM JENNIFER VEALE IN SEOUL

BETWEEN two and three million North Koreans have died of starvation or fled to neighbouring China and Russia since 1995 when chronic food shortages began, according to a secret survey said to have been conducted in the Communist country.

South Korea's intelligence agency said that a classified report by Pyongyang's Public Security Ministry showed that the North's population had plunged more than 500,000 a year over the past four years — due mainly to starvation and disease, but also to defection.

The National Intelligence Service did not reveal how it came by the information, which, if accurate, would mean that successive years of floods, drought and famine have left the country in worse shape than previously believed.

While the death toll is unknown, South Korean officials believe that the Stalinist nation's population has plunged to 22 million from 24 million in 1994.

Last year a visiting American congressional delegation reported that about two million North Koreans were believed to have died from malnutrition and disease since 1995.

"The North's population is expected to continue to decrease unless it eases its severe food shortages," an intelligence official was quoted as saying. The Public Security Ministry reportedly conducted the census ahead of the polls to elect candidates to the tenth Supreme People's Assembly — North Korea's parliament.

The North's food shortages began in 1994, when massive floods swept the country, destroying crops and huge tracts of arable land.

Drought in successive years and obsolete farming techniques compounded the famine. International relief agencies have responded over the

past five years with more than £625 million in food aid. But many North Koreans have fled to China and Russia looking for food and a trade in North Korean refugees has sprung up along the country's border with China.

The North is pressing for more food aid from the United States in return for access to an underground site which Washington suspects is a nuclear facility in breach of a 1994 anti-nuclear pact.

Under the deal, North Korea froze its nuclear programme in return for modern light-water reactors and economic aid from the United States and

its allies. A Seoul newspaper reported yesterday that agreement between Pyongyang and Washington was expected by early next month on a deal to swap food aid and an easing of sanctions for access to the disputed site. It said the deal would also cover Pyongyang's contentious missile programme.

Another report said that Seoul was considering providing the North with 30,000 tonnes of fertiliser next month before the spring planting season.

South Korea recently gave the go-ahead for private citizens to make aid donations to the North rather than go through the Red Cross.

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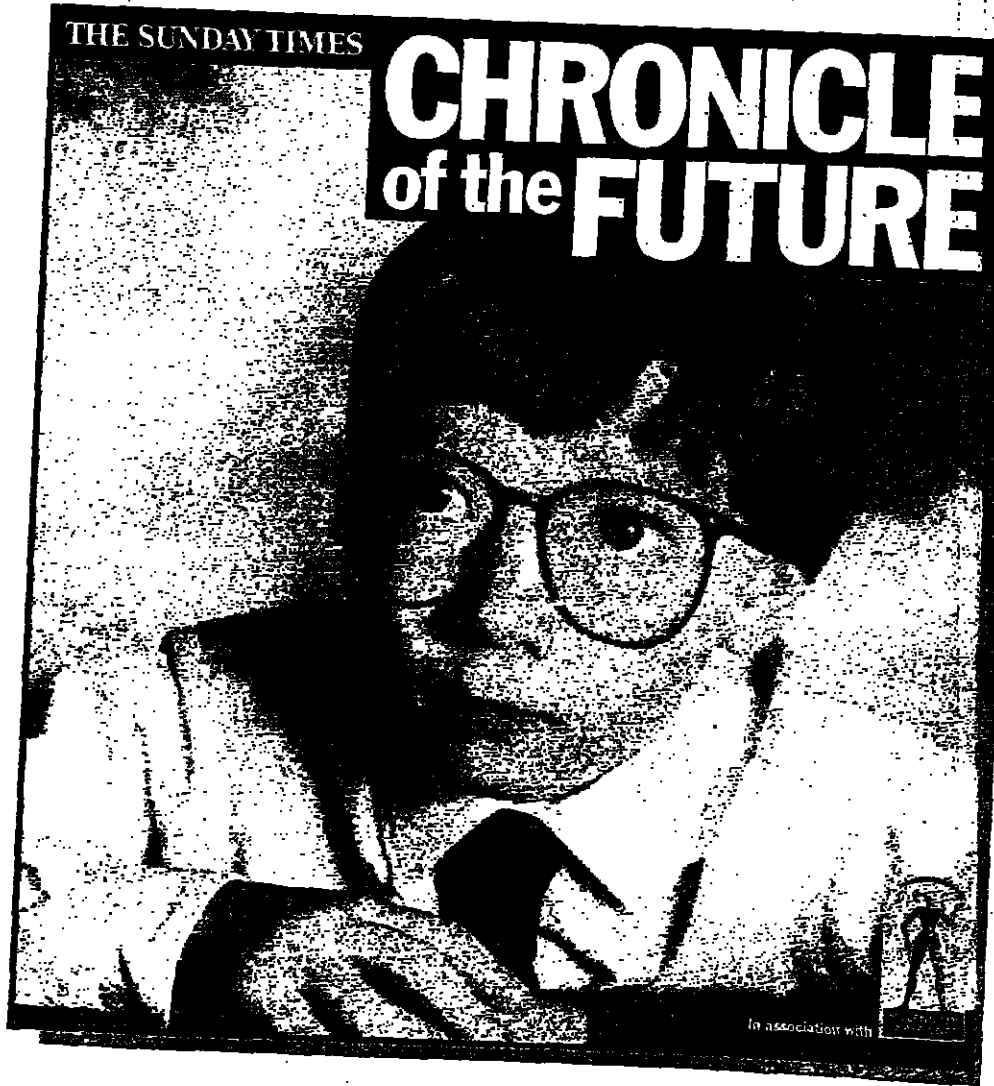
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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Gibraltar celebrates as court rules it has right to vote in EU elections

By DOMINIQUE SEARLE
IN GIBRALTAR

AMID the Anglo-Spanish dispute over Gibraltar's sovereignty and fishing rights, Peter Caruana, the Chief Minister, yesterday celebrated a landmark decision by the European court of Human Rights.

By a majority of 15 to two, the judges found Britain in breach of the Convention on Human Rights by denying

Gibraltar and other EU nationals living in Gibraltar the right to vote or stand for the European Parliament. Under British law, only citizens of the United Kingdom may take part in European elections. The court's ruling in effect orders Britain to extend voting rights to Gibraltar.

The court also ordered London to pay legal costs of £45,000 to Denise Matthews, who took the case to court. "This is a first step for Gibraltar to be recognised within the European Union," she said.

Announcing this as "a momentous and historic occasion", Mr Caruana said that, if Spain vetoed the extension of the vote to Gibraltar, it would be responsible for the denial of a basic human right. Ms Matthews, 24, who is British and lives in Gibraltar, applied to be registered as a voter in the European elections in April 1994, but was told Gibraltar was not included in the electoral franchise.

"I was shocked and delighted when I heard the news, and I am proud of my father who initiated the bid," she said. The ruling puts pressure on Britain, which has been arguing that it cannot allow EU votes by Gibraltarians without the consent of other member states, including Spain. The Foreign Office said Britain had never objected on principle to Gibraltarians voting in EU elections, and did not want to deny their rights.

A spokeswoman said: "It is not in our power unilaterally to extend the franchise... [but] the judgment greatly strengthens the basis on which to approach other member states. The Government will be initiating consultations on the way forward." Madrid declined to comment, but observers said Spain could be expected to oppose any moves to turn the ruling into law by rewriting the EU Act on direct elections, which would require a unanimous vote from EU members.

Mr Caruana told reporters that the ruling would be "an enormous boost for morale in Gibraltar, where many have felt that we are only part of the EU for a one-way street of obligations without benefits." Joe Bossano, Opposition leader, said Gibraltar should be encouraged to pursue other challenges, such as the right to self-determination.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and Abel Matutes, his Spanish counterpart, will meet on Sunday in Brussels to discuss the deadlock on Gibraltar. Mr Cook told the Commons this week that there could be no compromise over sovereignty against Gibraltarian wishes, and he will be seeking guarantees that Spain will lift its tough border controls which have disrupted traffic. Although the length of vehicle

queues has diminished slightly this week, Gibraltar police said visiting traffic had dropped by 80 per cent and that this, not the easing of controls by Spain, had led to the reduction. Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, yesterday accused the Government of weakening its position by failing to condemn unreservedly the Spanish threat to refuse recognition to Gibraltar driving licences.

Britons advised to quit Belgrade as peace talks falter

WESTERN nations yesterday called on their citizens to leave Yugoslavia immediately and began the evacuation of their embassies, clearly expecting that the Kosovo peace talks in Rambouillet are on the verge of breakdown.

Officials at the British, Canadian and American embassies in Belgrade urged all visitors and residents to leave, and Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said that planning had begun for American diplomats to pull out.

"In view of the increasingly volatile situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is advising against travel to the FRY and advising British nationals in the FRY to leave immediately," a British diplomat said.

But the Foreign Office insisted last night that its diplomats would remain, and that the embassy's statement was merely a warning to the large British community in Yugoslavia to get ready to pull out.

Anxious not to pre-empt the failure of the Rambouillet talks, Britain was trying not to give any impression that bombing was imminent. But the statement by the State Department and by the Canadians suggests that the contingency plans have been made and that the main Western embassies are afraid that their citizens could become hostages if they remained behind.

Western officials close to the Kosovo talks clung grimly to their line that an eleven-hour truce can be achieved before midday tomorrow, bringing the ethnic Albanians and Serbs to a deal on Kosovo's political future and helping to save the Contact Group from diplomatic catastrophe.

The readiness of Nato jets to begin

Dayton mediator
may be called in,
write Tom Walker
in Rambouillet and
Michael Binyon

bombing sorties against targets within Serbia concentrated minds and heightened what one diplomat called the "rumble over Rambouillet".

But at the same time a telephone call from President Yeltsin to President Clinton warned the West against precipitate action. "We will not let you touch Kosovo," Mr Yeltsin is reported to have said, although the White House later denied there had been any contact between the two leaders for days.

As the British Embassy in Belgrade began organising a convoy to take non-essential staff, families and dependants out of Serbia today, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and his French counterpart, Hubert Védrine, sensed that public opinion in Belgrade was wavering. A joint press release they sent to media in the Serbian capital implored Yugoslavs to have "the courage for the right choice". Only Nato ground troops could save Kosovo, it said, and to help "bring Yugoslavia firmly into the family of modern European nations".

Most controversially, it promised Yugoslavs "the Kosovo Albanians will have to give up their demand for independence", a phrase that angers the Albanians, who claim that Yugoslavia's sovereignty over Kosovo cannot be direct-

ly stated in the overall Contact Group peace plan. There was no word last night as to whether the largely state-controlled media would use the release.

On a day when the conference room in Rambouillet spun out of control, facts were at a premium. The hottest whisper within the journalist-filled cafés beyond the chateau gates was that Richard Holbrooke, the Balkan peacebroker and architect of the Dayton Accords for Bosnia, was about to bring his messianic touch to the talks. Adding to the general sense of chaos, a group of 500 Kurds chanting *Libérez l'Océan*, continued their protests in the main town square.

Reliable sources did confirm, however, that new articles had been added to the Contact Group's constitution for the autonomous Kosovo, which the Serb delegation at least deemed broadly acceptable. But Albanian delegates were said to be "spitting blood" at a fudge they believed had been cooked up behind their backs, and which included the dreaded sovereignty principle.

Another article they contest provides for a bicameral legislature, with an upper house containing members from all of Kosovo's ethnic communities, with the threshold for representation reduced from 5 per cent to 0.5 per cent. President Milosevic is said to have insisted on such a body, through which he hopes to put a break on the power of the proposed Albanian-dominated lower house.

Away from the legal niceties, the Pentagon said it was sending 41 warplanes to forward staging bases in Europe, including 12 F117 Nighthawk stealth fighters, ten radar-jamming EA6B Growlers, four KC10 refuellers and 25 KC135 refuellers. Additional aircraft, including B2 and B2 bombers, remain on standby.

Calvin Klein bows to child ad's critics

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS
IN NEW YORK

CALVIN KLEIN, the clothes manufacturer, has withdrawn a US advertising campaign after critics said that the advertisements for children's underwear may have gone too far.

"The comments and reaction that we have received today raised issues that we had not fully considered," the company said in a statement. "As a result, we have decided to discontinue the campaign immediately."

The campaign was to have been launched yesterday with a billboard in New York City's Times Square featuring boys and girls in underwear jumping on a sofa. A black-and-white photograph of the promotion was published in full-page newspaper advertisements on Wednesday.

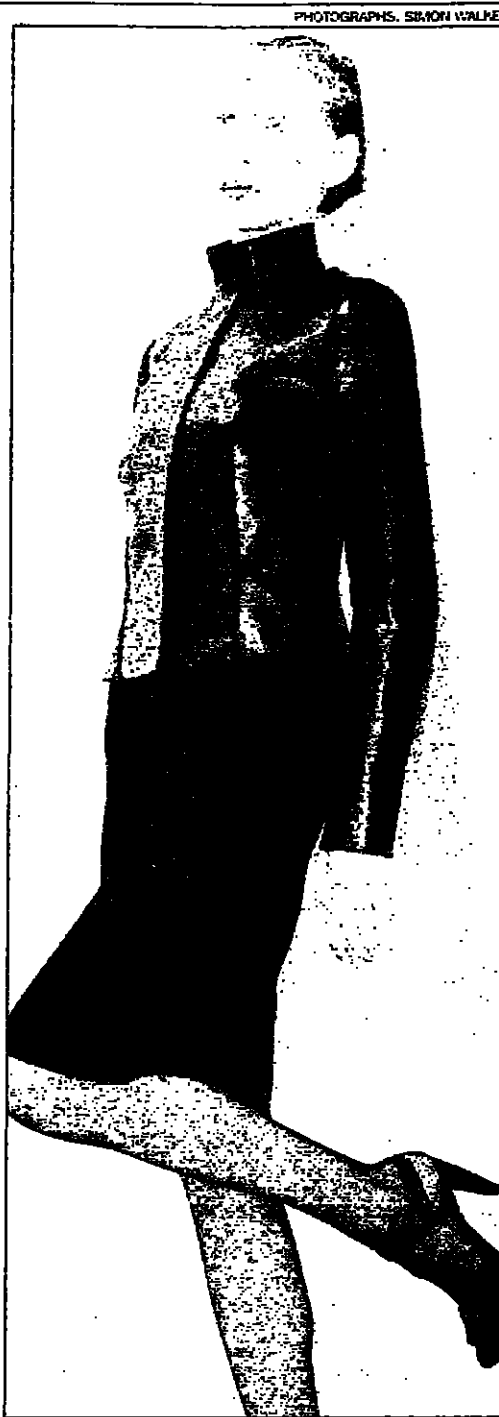
"You have paedophiles in this society. Anything that could get them excited is irresponsible and reckless," Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association in Tupelo, Mississippi, said, adding that the photograph was pornographic.

Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor of New York, who championed the transformation of Times Square from a seedy peepshow area into a glitzy commercial centre, had said there was nothing the city could do about the billboard, which would have been placed among other advertisements that included scantily clad men and women selling everything from bras to socks.

"The First Amendment [to the Constitution] allows a whole range of expression," he said. But he added: "It's in very bad taste."

Bernard Yenclo, of the International Centre for Photography, in Manhattan, said that the advertisement was "a very ordinary image", similar to family snapshots.

The company said that the campaign to launch Calvin Klein underwear for kids was "intended to show children smiling, laughing and just being themselves".



One of the fashion shots for this year's Calvin Klein autumn-winter collection



Calvin Klein discusses the withdrawal of the campaign



Photograph that led to the row

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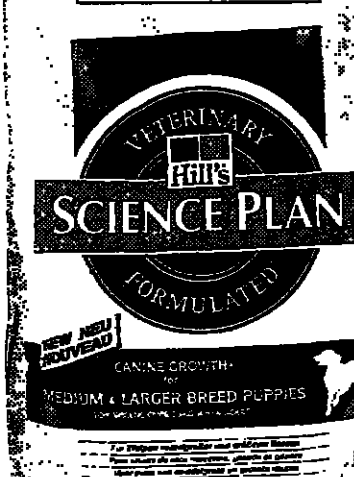
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Hillbilly robbers spend their way into jail

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

A GANG of mobile home-dwelling hillbillies have made a name for themselves by pulling off one of America's biggest robberies — and being among the dumbest criminals.

The gang escaped with \$17 million (£10.4 million) after an audacious robbery. But they were caught because they could not wait to spend their loot.

Steve Chambers had conspired with David Ghanit, an employee at the armoured car firm Loomis, Fargo & Co. to make off with almost a ton and a half of cash from the company's warehouse in Charlottesville, North Carolina.

But while Ghanit lay low in Mexico, Chambers, 31, and his wife, Michelle, 26, decided to spend, spend, spend.

Neighbours started to scratch their heads when three weeks after the robbery, the couple swapped their mobile home for a \$635,000 mansion in a gated community at a swish country club.

Then they bought a convertible BMW, a Harley-Davidson, a \$10,000 pool table, \$43,000 diamond ring, Rolex watches and \$20,000-worth of Cuban cigars which were ruined because Chambers did

‘When he was thrown out he bragged that he would come back and buy the place’

not know he had to put water in the humidifier. She had breast implants, and he turned up at a very ordinary restaurant in a chauffeur-driven limousine. On one night out he left \$900 in tips, and when he argued with his wife in a nightclub and was thrown out he bragged that he would return and buy the place.

Mrs Chambers even went to the bank with \$200,000 in bills, still neatly bundled in Loomis, Fargo wrappings, and asked how much she could deposit before the bank would report the transaction.

The police were tipped off, and recruited an accomplice of Chambers, who had become frightened after being asked to smuggle a load of cash to the Cayman Islands. Officers swooped after they tracked down Ghanit, who had become a target of a Chambers murder plot. Seventeen people are now awaiting sentence.

Deputy marshal Steve Gladden said the stupidity of the robbers was astonishing: ‘Let's face it, you're moving from a trailer in a field in a remote county to the country club. It was very much the Beverly Hillbillies.’



Evan Slater suffers a fall while defying waves up to 30ft in the ultimate test of nerve in the surfing contest at Mavericks, near Half Moon Bay, northern California

Surfers fall for \$15,000

Los Angeles: Twenty surfers known for their ability to ride waves the height of three-storey houses competed for hard cash off one of the world's most dangerous beaches. The winner took home \$10,000 (£5,500), and a \$5,000 bonus for pulling off a stunt most surfers only ever manage by accident — a vertical free-fall (Giles Whittell writes).

Darryl Virostko, 27, executed a perfect ‘airdrop’ on the front face of a 30ft swell as it rolled towards the northern Californian coast. The manoeuvre required him to lose contact with his board, land safely on it again and surf away without being dashed on the rocks.

The contest on Wednesday was the first one-day invitational to be held at Mavericks, a legendary break hidden from the coast road by a windswept promontory a short drive south of San Francisco.



<http://www.mavericksurf.com> — website for Mavericks contest
<http://www.dailymail.com/usa/feature2.html> — Surfers Environmental Alliance website USA
<http://www.bbsurf.org/> — Official website for British Surfing news.

Black's belated pardon

President to clear 19th-century victim of army racism, writes Ian Brodie in Washington

A BLACK American hero who fell victim to racism more than a century ago will be exonerated at the White House today.

President Clinton will grant a posthumous pardon to Henry Flipper, who was born a slave before the Civil War. With enormous perseverance in the face of racial hostility, he became the first black to graduate with an army commission from West Point, only to be accused falsely of theft.

Lieutenant Flipper's descendants and others who have fought to clear his name will attend the ceremony. His triumphs over adversity have been an inspiration to other blacks. General Colin Powell kept a portrait of Flipper on the wall of his Pentagon office while serving as America's top military officer. At West Point, there is an annual Henry Flipper award for the cadet showing the greatest courage and deter-

mination in the face of overwhelming odds. However, the recognition and respect now shown for Flipper did not take root until well after his death in 1940 at the age of 84.

At West Point, he was ostracised by white cadets. After graduation, he commanded black frontier troops, known as Buffalo Soldiers, with distinction. Then, disastrously, he was charged with embezzling several thousand dollars while serving as quartermaster at Fort Davis, Texas.

He was almost certainly framed by white officers who openly hated him and wanted to punish him for his friendship with a white woman who was his riding companion. At his court

martial, Flipper was cleared of theft but found guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer for allegedly lying to his commanding officer and trying to cover up the missing money. His military career ended in disgrace with a dishonourable discharge.

As a civilian, Flipper prospered. He was a mining engineer and an accomplished linguist who translated complex documents relating to Spanish land grants. He became a newspaper editor, an assistant to the Secretary of the Interior and an essayist with surprisingly conservative views. But his lifelong efforts to remove the stain on his record were unavailing and he was buried in an unmarked grave in Atlan-

ta. The army did not yield until 1976, when his discharge was upgraded to honourable, but his conviction was not overturned.

His body was exhumed and moved to his home town of Thomasville in Georgia, where he was buried with military honours and last December a post office was named after him. There is talk now of moving him again, this time to Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr Clinton has chosen to honour Flipper during Black History Month, when schools across America focus on both the familiar and little-known struggles against discrimination in the nation's past. Scholars believe it is the first time any presidential pardon has been granted posthumously.

Tom Carhart, a historian who researched the case, said: ‘Finally an ugly scar has been removed from our national record.’



Flipper: General Colin Powell saw him as inspiration

French court orders return of fugitive killer to US

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

IRA EINHORN, the hippy guru convicted of murdering his girlfriend in 1977, should be extradited to the United States to face a retrial, a French court ruled yesterday.

But lawyers for Einhorn, 57, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993, said they would launch an appeal to the French Supreme Court that could delay extradition proceedings for months. Einhorn will remain free while he waits for the appeal after the court in Bordeaux, southwest France,

refused to remand him in custody.

Even if the Supreme Court ruling goes against him, he can ask the Prime Minister to refuse extradition. ‘I know he will try to escape again,’ said Mary Maddux, the sister of Helen Maddux, whose decomposed body was found in Einhorn's Philadelphia flat 22 years ago. ‘But the world is going to be very small for him now. Wherever he goes, there will be someone who will recognise him.’

The Bordeaux court linked its ruling to the condition that Einhorn be granted a new and fair trial in America. Un-

der French law, anyone sentenced *in absentia* has an automatic right to a retrial, although no such provision exists in American law. ‘The guarantee of a new trial that the American Government may give cannot be believed,’ Dominique Delteil, Einhorn's lawyer, said. ‘We still have some cards to play.’

The fugitive spent 16 years on the run in Europe after he jumped bail in 1981. He was eventually traced to the village of Champagne-Mouton in southwest France, where he was living under the assumed name of Mallon with his Swedish wife, Annika Flodin.



Einhorn yesterday: fled US after murder trial

Driver accused of strangling Italian princess's husband

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI

POLICE in Mexico are questioning a family chauffeur in a murder inquiry launched after the Argentine husband of an Italian princess was found naked and strangled in his villa in the central state of Morelos.

The body of Reina Corbalán, 60, the husband of Princess Maria Beatrice of Savoy and son-in-law of Italy's last King, and a former UN diplomat, was discovered by the gardener at the couple's home in Cuernavaca, 55 miles outside Mexico City.

After ruling out suicide as a

possibility, prosecutors ordered the arrest of the victim's chauffeur, Juan Manuel Barrera Pina, who is accused of murdering his employer.

The chief prosecutor, José Castilla Pombo, said that the motive for the crime was unclear, but the authorities have stopped looking for other suspects or accomplices.

Señor Corbalán, who was also a law lecturer at the University of the State of Morelos, had a son and daughter with Princess Beatrice.

The Princess's father, the former King Umberto II, was the last Italian monarch; he was forced from the throne

and into exile in Portugal after a referendum in the wake of the Second World War.

Princess Beatrice moved to Mexico, where she married Señor Corbalán after her parents divorced.


□ Acapulco: The father of the Mexican World Cup football star Jorge Campos was kidnapped after his son when armed men forced him into a pick-up truck.

The men abducted Alvaro Campos, 65, on Wednesday, according to two relations. Jorge Campos was goalkeeper for Mexico's national team through two World Cups.

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Surfers fall for \$15,000

Los Angeles Times and... known for their ability to ride waves... the height of three-story houses... for hard rock off and on the beach... more dangerous... The... and a \$15,000... for... off a... more... even... to... a... (The...)

What drives a child to martyrdom?

A Kurdish girl's protest symbolises the idealism of every teenager, says Vanora Bennett

Wild-eyed, with flames pouring from her back, 14-year-old Nejla Kantepir staggered into Britain's consciousness this week after setting herself alight during a Kurdish nationalist protest. The faces of the London policemen who smothered the blaze ripping through her black commando gear were awestruck.

That awe had little to do with clichés about solid Brits baffled by the melodrama of foreign politics. Instead, it was the shock felt by adults, with their risk-averse lives of rational decision and compromise, confronted by the limitless passion of youth.

Self-immolation is the most extreme form of this passion, in which all the metaphors used to describe a state of mind — "fired up", "alight", "burning" — fuse with reality. But whether they burn, starve or shoot themselves, teenagers have always been the likeliest members of any society to adopt extreme causes and sacrifice their lives to them.

Less bound than their elders into life's mundane detail, teenagers are idealistic enough to believe that their dreams will come true if they only fight hard enough for them. In different ways, the young democracy protesters at Tiananmen Square, the Israeli student Yigal Amir, who shot the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995 in an attempt to derail the Middle East peace process, the boy soldiers of Liberia, Chechnya and Cambodia, and Jan Palach, the Czech youth who set fire to himself in Prague in a political protest in 1969, all obeyed the same drive towards youthful martyrdom.

Only very occasionally do

the 1990s have been an era of Green activism and animal rights campaigns, some of them violent; last year, the animal rights activist Barry Horne came close to death in a hunger strike. But the lack of authoritarian responses from the State has taken the heat out of these actions.

Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that teenagers here are more sedate than those in other parts of the world. Young British adults are full of the same energy, enthusiasm, idealism — and lack of boundaries — that set adolescents from other parts of the world literally on fire. The only difference is that, here, they are would-be martyrs without a cause.

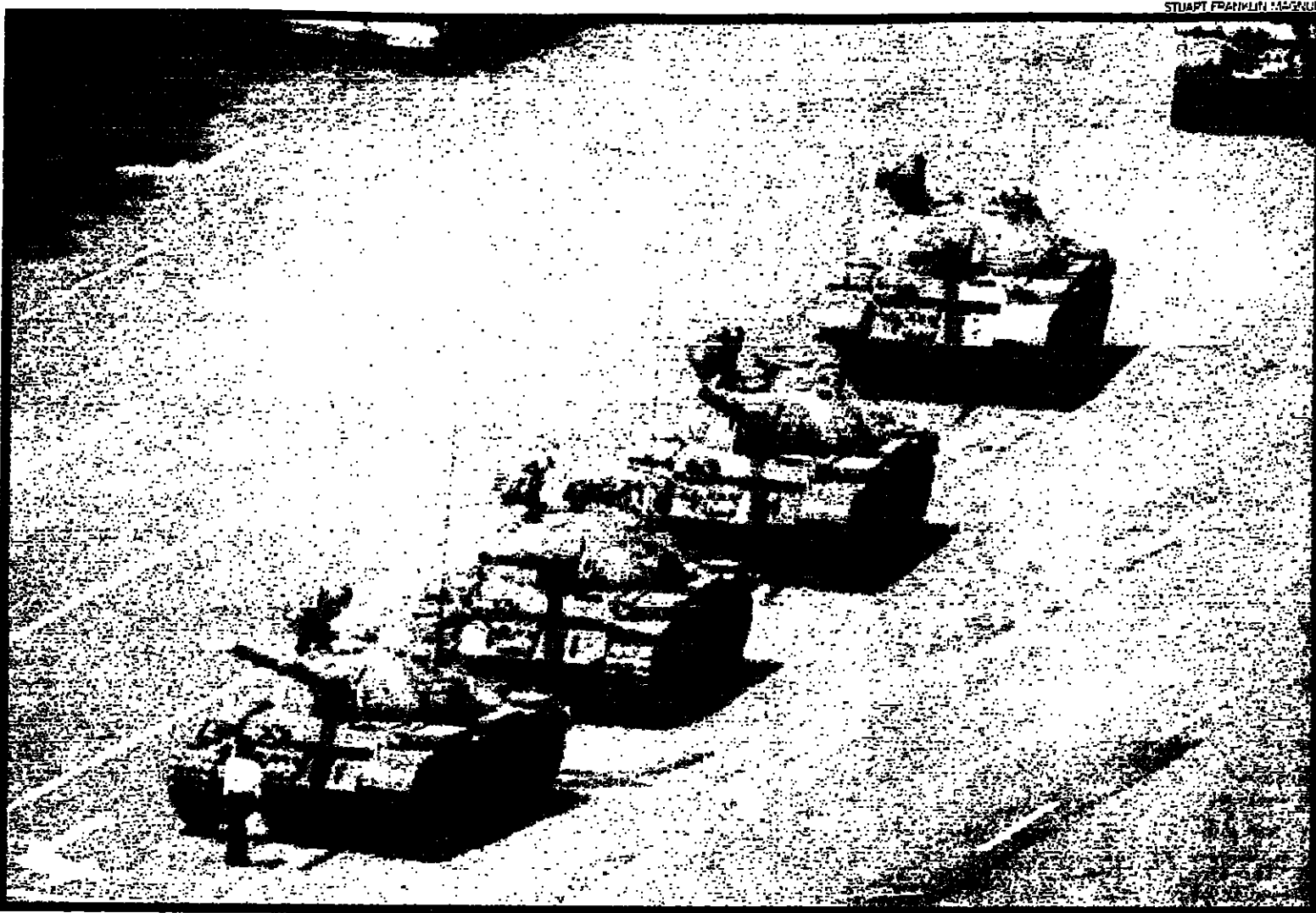
Our consumer society does its best to channel the limitless energy of its teenagers to its own profitable ends: into the worship of sports or entertainment stars, or towards an endlessly changing fashion scene, whose gods must be placated with regular purchases.

In the West, the language of youth culture has all the violence of teenage martyrdom elsewhere. But here young extremists are fitness fanatics, *Star Trek* fanatics or fashion fanatics. When our teenagers weep, scream and fight they are likely to be at football matches or pop concerts. Their martyrs are dead rock or film stars. And whichever subculture inspires their adoration, it is likely to make them work harder in order to buy the tickets, posters, or shoes that are its badges.

Even when Western adults grumble about the excesses of adolescence, they are generally happy with the status quo. Pin-up culture is a safety-valve, adorning Robbie Wil-

son, stalked by heroes, villains, mystics and revolutionaries. The terrifying lives and thoughts of teenagers unite them; all that divides them is finding a suitable cause.

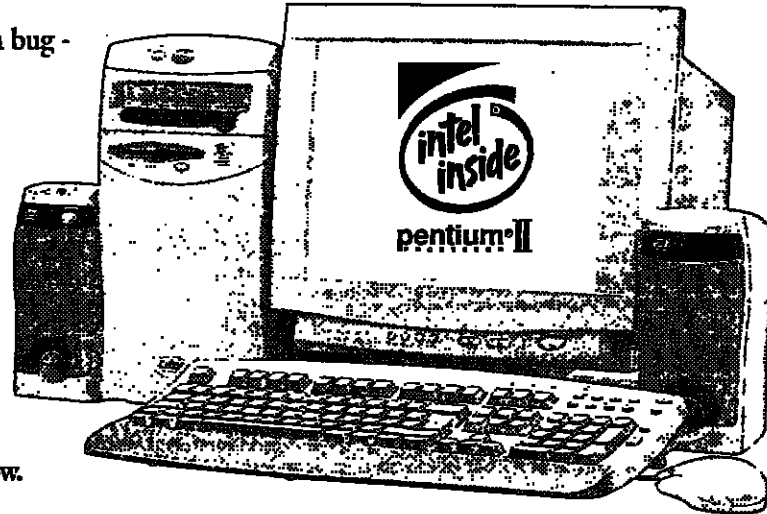
Adults watching adolescents struggle to make sense of these larger-than-life agonies can only hope that the saving graces of irony and proportion come early to them, and meanwhile that the tormented human being growing up beside them recognises the wisdom of George Bernard Shaw's dictum: "Martyrdom (is) the only way in which a man can become famous without ability."



Rebel with a cause, a young pro-democracy protester defies the tanks in Tiananmen Square: young people can be heroic, fearless and foolhardy

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Teenagers in turmoil

saying
NO

In the final extract from her new book, child psychotherapist **Asha Phillips** looks at the trials of adolescence and why parents should be strong and flexible

The early adolescent years, from about 12 to 14, are a period of great change. Physical growth is more rapid than at any other time, and sexuality enters the frame. Parents often complain of feeling that their child has become a stranger in their home, forgetting that the child may feel quite a stranger to himself. Hormones are raging, he may feel tearful, elated, excited. There is an enormous preoccupation with the body and its sensations, and with appearances.

Adolescents are often tearful and, if they are close enough to their parents to speak to them, will communicate their bewilderment: "I'm sad," "I feel lonely," "Nobody likes me at school," "Everybody laughs at me," followed by "but I don't know why". Even if all the evidence is to the contrary — friends telephoning, the child being admired and his company sought — these feelings of insecurity and isolation are real.

Another puzzle is how different he can feel from one day to the next. His moods and self-image sway like branches in the wind. And because the adolescent fluctuates between being quite mature and being infantile, parents get wrong-footed. If you talk to the young child in him, the adolescent may criticise you for being patronising, for not trusting him. If you treat him as an adult, he may feel pushed and uncared for. Whichever aspect of him you talk to, it seems that you fail to take the other into account. This unpredictability makes everyone in the family feel that they are walking on eggshells. The issue of saying "no" and setting limits becomes delicate, and many families feel that they are failing.

During this time of change and insecurity, our growing child may feel out of control. It is particularly important that we should not be invaded and taken over by the same feelings as him. When he cried as a baby, you could just hold and soothe him. The teenager will show his upset quite differently, at times becoming angry, provocative, fearful, sad, confused. Sometimes we can help by talking to him. But, more subtly, it is the home setting — the environment that we provide for him — that will make him feel safe. Our ability to make rules, to stick to them, to have a sense of what is appropriate, will contribute to how much he feels that he can venture forth from a secure base.

The key is to be strong and flexible. This helps to give teenagers confidence. Parents have to accommodate new aspects of their child, to readjust their picture of who he is. It can be a great source of stability for the adolescent to know that his parents feel confident in him throughout these changes. We can help by welcoming our children's search for identity and the many guesses that they may make before they find what suits them, secure in the knowledge that what is at the core of their personality is good.

It is hard to believe this when your teenager seems rebellious, dirty or antisocial. However, if this positive vision of himself is what he sees reflected in your eyes, it will boost his self-esteem and help him to make wise choices. This does not mean that you should be blind to problems and difficulties, or adopt a blackmailing stance which affirms that if you trust him, he cannot let you down. I am stressing a basic faith in your child which comes from the confidence that you have done your best for him, and that now he must start venturing out on his own.

We have seen how structure, rules and boundaries make children feel safe. During adolescence, rules are often fought against and limits considered frustrating or even crippling. Does this mean that we



Teenage angst: conflict with parents is inevitable as children struggle to create a new identity for themselves

should give them up? The adolescent needs to fly, to break the rules. Again we are faced with a balancing act.

The need is twofold. First, the adolescent needs parents to struggle against, to have the row with. Just as the baby needs to kick against your hand to get a measure of how far he can stretch, so the adolescent needs a degree of resistance to explore his reach. It is important to allow that and not to try too hard to be the "good" parent when what he wants is to fight a "bad" parent. He may argue with you as a way of finding out what he really thinks: he may reject your point of view in order to look for his own. Insisting that your children agree with you, or recognise that you are on their side, does not help them to venture out into the world. Having a conflict and resolving it will build up their strength.

Secondly, there are times when you need to say "no" firmly. Sometimes the child really wants you to restrict him, he is frightened or worried about something but does not want to lose face in front of others, or to be disappointed in his image of himself as the adventurous one.

When adolescents speak with passion and conviction, we imagine them to be strong and determined, forgetting how vulnerable they are. It is the fluctuating state of their feelings that frequently bewilders us — and them. There is a constant oscillation from closeness to distance within the family.

Many teenagers need space to be on their own, to find their place in the peer group by themselves. For some it is easier to do this by cutting themselves off from the family for a while. From the parents' point of view, the child who used to come home from school and want to be around you, watch television and have a snack and a drink now goes straight to his room and disappears until he is called. The telephone rings continually, or he wants to be out with his friends. Many parents feel terribly excluded, but bearing this phase is crucial to the child's development.

It may be difficult to decide what is ordinary rebellion and what is pathology. Generally, however, the adolescent who needs extra help will alarm you deeply.

WHY TEENAGERS WANT RULES

rules were sensible. For instance, if you ask to be told where he is going and when he will be back, you are giving him freedom within a setting. The reason for such a rule is usually to ensure that he is safe, or that he can be contacted in case of an emergency. These concerns give children the feeling that they are cared about. They may well fight you, accusing you of not trusting them, but sticking to your requirement despite their protestations gives them the feel-

ing that you are prepared to put up a fight for their welfare — that you will not let them put themselves at risk. This gives a tremendous boost to a child's basic feelings of self-esteem and security. The teenagers whom I spoke to also believed in establishing rules early. Examples included doing homework and helping at home. They gave warning of the dangers of bribery: "if you pay someone to do something, they will want it every time."

Although adolescents seem not to value their parents' opinions, they are very sensitive to what is said. They are wondering whether you like the person they are developing into. For instance, they may think that your taste in clothes is "sad", but if you criticise a style that they like, they are cut to the quick.

One of my 13-year-old daughter's friends told me how she bought a new dress that she thought was lovely. When she first wore it, her father, mildly disapproving, said "what's that?" She never wore the dress again.

Incision by Issey, gauze by Gaultier

I was bad enough when all you had to worry about when you were rushed in for emergency rhinoplasty was whether the ambulance would take you to Dr Steven Hoeftlin's surgery. Here, you might wake up four hours later to discover that "Doc Hollywood" — at the insistence of Sylvester Stallone — had fitted you with one of Michael Jackson's discarded noses.

But the patient experience has just become even more stressful. Now, as the ambulance pulls away, your loved ones will be left standing on the doorstep not knowing for certain whether the way they saw you last — blue shirt, navy chinos, brogues — will clash with the hospital's designer colour scheme.

That's the kind of pressure you will be under if you check in to London's first designer hospital, opening in Harley Street. With an interior designed by Kelly Hoppen, it will "provide for patients who require nursing attendance but who want the surroundings and service that only a top hotel can provide".

Hoppen promises that it will even keep the phone numbers of everyone who is anyone, so "if you want Ben de List to show you his new collection", he can. ("Nurse, we are losing this patient. If there's still no improvement, we may have to expose him to next month's *Vogue*. Keep his relatives informed.")

Of course, the designer hospital is just a step on the way to designer surgery, and couture houses have been sharpening their scalpels with a view to offering you these signature operations:

Issey Miyake — a more holistic approach to facelifts and tummy tucks. The Miyake method avoids making any incision but instead tightens up the slack skin around the forehead by creasing it into a concertina pattern, thereby eliminating loose skin and creating an interesting facial design feature.

Gucci — recently regarded as a surgical style favoured only by ageing Monaco playboys, the Gucci treatment is now all the rage among younger patients, who were impressed by appendectomy operations that kept the scar hidden even when wearing Gucci's lowest velvet hipsters. This year patients will be sporting a funkier, 1970s psychedelic look, in which the incision scar follows a prominent wavy line across the midriff. Instead of using stitches, the suture is secured with interlocking gold Gs.

Jean Paul Gaultier — specialises in novelty breast enlargements. Women unnerved by scare stories about silicone leakage associated with traditional operations have two stainless steel conical peaks inserted into

their breasts instead, thereby guaranteeing a perfect fit for Gaultier's conical bras.

Donna Karan — operations that manage to be both timeless and modern at the same time. But nobody would pretend that Karan's clinical couture comes cheap. Anxious to dispel the impression held by some members of the British Medical Association that she lives in an ivory tower, Donna has also created a diffusion DKNY range of more affordable, off-the-peg operations.

Prada — can always be relied on to come up with the season's must-have treatment. This year it has taken the handbag concept into the next millennium by surgically inserting a zippered pouch into the chest cavity: no fashion-conscious woman will dare to walk down Sloane Street without this one.

Ralph Lauren — Ralph brings his Wild West pioneer look to Harley Street. Cysts are just gouged out with a sheath knife by a surgeon dressed in denim and a red gingham shirt (both available from the current Polo range and chargeable to your room bill, though not claimable against BUPA). The wound is then sterilised with a splash of bourbon. Although deceptively simple, such treatments are among the most expensive available in Harley Street, mostly because of the built-in cost of medical negligence insurance.

Paul Smith — the designer to turn to if you want treatment that is classic with a twist. Thus, while Smith favours traditional cures such as leeches, he will dress the wound in a 24oz Italian, 100 per cent Pima cotton lint — crease-proof to make life easier for the business traveller — with a row of functioning buttonholes along one edge to allow the nurse to monitor regularly how the wound is healing.

Ben de List — his signature facelift is similar to those of other Harley Street designers, except for the stylistic innovation that, with Ben, the skin is stretched on the bias.

Chanel — offers a discreet but chic procedure by which unsightly varicose veins are artfully reconfigured to create the effect of the patient's legs being covered by an alluring pattern of carefully spaced Cs.

Comme des Garçons — Rei Kawakubo carries her passion for humour and asymmetry into the operating theatre. Thus, while Comme des Garçons surgeons are happy to perform conventional hip replacements, patients frequently wake from their anaesthetic to find that their new hip has been amusingly attached to their left shoulder.

The patients? They are so thrilled, they are uttering their very own Hippocratic oaths.



MAN ON THE SIDE
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A North Sea change for the better

It's time to update Britishness, says Douglas Alexander, MP

In less than 100 days, Scotland will have its first parliament in 300 years. When we were last offered an assembly, in 1979, the majority in favour was narrow and hesitant. By 1997 it had become massive, and confident. This North Sea change has been interpreted by some as the primal reassertion of ancient nationhood, a *Braveheart* flourish. But it is recent British history, as much as old Scottish passions, which has driven the change. Margaret Thatcher is more responsible for devolution than Mel Gibson. It is important that all of us understand this process for it affects the central question of politics — do we argue over ideas, or clash over identities?

During the 1980s, the great constitutional question became the existence of Scotland within Britain. Could Scottish nationhood, which had survived since 1707, endure when a British Government set about what Scots saw as the systematic undermining of basic Scottish institutions? It was a debate that spilt out of the academy and on to the street. The popular Scottish novelist, William McEwan, reflected this mood in 1987, arguing: "If we allow her (Mrs Thatcher) to continue, she will remove from the word Scottish any meaning other than the geographical. We will either defend our identity or lose it."

Those words came to my mind the following year, when I listened as a student to Mrs Thatcher's "Sermon on the Mount". Her address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was intended to connect her beliefs to those of Scots, but it only confirmed her distance. Even in such a Presbyterian setting, my mood would have brightened had I known that, in time, the same building would house the first meeting of a Scottish parliament.

Its establishment is the consequence of a victory for ideas — the modernised left-of-centre values which prevailed at the last election and which seek to empower the citizen through new institutions. But victory for our ideas has seen others, such as the Scottish National Party, attempt to limit politics to the mere assertion of national identity. Now the central constitutional question has become the future of Britain itself. In the coming elections in Scotland and Wales we must fight to affirm that the values which bind our nations together can triumph over a nationalism that would break us apart.

Arthur Schlesinger has argued that countries break up when they fail to give ethnically diverse peoples compelling reasons to see themselves as part of the same country. In the age of Empire, when Scots enjoyed the prosperity and prospects that came with worldwide opportunities, there was no desire in Scotland to reject everything that was British. In the first half of this century, when Britain was united by shared purpose, there was no desire to abandon our loyalty to Britain. We stood together to defeat fascism, and worked together to build a welfare state.

The contemporary question is whether, in an age of global change, the case for the Union has weakened. For two centuries, the argument for the Union was characterised by deference to traditional British institutions from the monarchy downwards. Yet, as Tom Nairn has correctly diagnosed, those ancient, unformed institutions have ceased to command the loyalty they once did. The old Unionism of Army and King is inadequate to meet the challenge of the new separatism. But just as importantly, it is also inadequate to meet the challenge of framing a modern identity for an inclusive, multicultural Britain.

What unites modern Britain is not, at root, a set of institutions alone. It is the depth of shared ideals. We are all enhanced by the sharing of values and experiences. We would be diminished by a retreat from a generous vision that celebrates all the people of these islands. Britain no longer finds its values expressed just by marching in step under the same military colours, or enjoying the benefits of an integrated market. There are other bodies which come closer to embodying modern Britain's sense of itself. The National Health Service, itself a victory for progressive ideas, is a legitimate focus for national pride. And everyone understands that National means British.

The challenge now is to establish and sustain institutions in the same progressive spirit which reflect both our diverse identities and new locations of power. It is time to acknowledge honestly that we all have different layers of loyalty — to our families, and to our communities, as well as to our country — that express different parts of our identity.

For 18 years, Conservatives seemed to deny this. They appeared to demand that Scots choose between being Scottish or British. It is a demand echoed by William Hague's one-dimensional "British way". Yet part of the reason that they now have not a single seat north of the border is that they failed to recognise that, for my generation, Scottishness is a matter of pride, and worthy of expression. It is undeniable, yet it need not be exclusive. What neither the Tories nor the Nationalists seem able to reconcile themselves to is that pride in Scottishness or Welshness does not require the eradication of Britishness. It is a crashing *non sequitur* to say that because Britain is diverse, Britain must break up. The progressive spirit celebrates inclusion, and animates our constitutional reforms: it is a warm wind of change. Pulling a society together is a worthier ambition than pulling a country apart because politics is about more than identities. It is also about ideals.

The author, along with Gordon Brown, MP, published *New Scotland, New Britain*, this week for the Smith Institute.

Mary Ann Sieghart is away.



"'COURSE, I WAS QUITE PREPARED TO GET THEM OUT MYSELF..."

The Kurd Instinct

When the mobs begin to howl, Mr Cook fidgets for the trigger

Bomb Turkey now. Let's not wait. Flatten Ankara. Take out the Bosphorus, take out Izmir. If we can bomb Serbia for the Kosovans and bomb President Saddam Hussein for the Iraqi Kurds, we can surely bomb Turkey for their mountain brothers. Why wait until "more people die" or until "Robin Cook's patience is exhausted"? New Labour bombs sooner. It bombs for peace. Thatcher bombed but Blair bombs bigger. What hypocrites we are. We showed not the slightest interest in Kosovo until a violent faction of the Kosovan separatist movement began killing people. Then suddenly Kosovan autonomy is an "issue of international security and human rights". Likewise with the Kurds. Only when a violent minority takes its violence to the ambassadorial ghettos of Western Europe is every newspaper alert to the cause. Every radio sounding the grievance, every talk show fawning for a spokesman. As Michael Heseltine said of urban policy in the 1980s, "It takes a bomb".

The path ahead is predictable. The Turks will show scant respect for Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader, largely because of the violence he has visited on Turks and on the many moderate Kurds who now permeate Turkish society. His PKK guerrillas will then retaliate. The Turks will hit back in turn, attacking Kurdish areas and "cleansing" villages.

Already we can hear the early murmur of the chancellery banquets of Western diplomats and politicians wailing: "Something must be done". The adjectival ratchet will begin. Turkish behaviour will become "unacceptable", "deplorable", and "involving severe consequences". Robin Cook's eyes will bulge. Madeleine Albright's clichés will burst a blood vessel. Intervention always needs heroes and villains. Someone else's terrorist always makes a hero. "Freedom fighters" look good on television.

Sooner or later Mr Cook and Ms Albright will demand negotiation on the future of Kurdistan, and summon all sides to Lancaster House or Rambouillet. Photogenic ships and bombers will rush higher and thither at vast expense. Participants will be threatened with laser-guided pinpoint surgical strikes if they refuse to do as they are told. Unlucky troops will find themselves committed to "peace-keeping" for life, as in Bosnia and

Kuwait. Lucky ones will get to leave with the camera crews, as from Beirut, Somalia and Rwanda.

In this newspaper last week, the Foreign Secretary chided me for asking "what on earth we are doing" meddling in the internal affairs of sovereign states. In Sierra Leone, he said, Britain was "making every effort to support those who are trying to prevent innocent civilians being murdered". In Kosovo, Britain was "trying to help the parties to a protracted conflict find a peaceful solution that prevents further ethnic massacres". That is a description of a policy, not a justification. The only justification Mr Cook offered was a double negative, that "to ignore what is happening in places like Sierra Leone and Kosovo would not meet any definition of a responsible foreign policy".

What is that definition? We still have none. What are Britain's criteria for politico-military intervention? To imply that anyone not signed up to the present sabre-rattling is "ignoring" a massacre is mere point-scoring. I could say that Mr Cook's obsession with sanctions is "ignoring" the deaths of some of the world's poorest people. I could plead with him to send him what he is splashing out on military adventures as humanitarian relief to the many conflicts that he is "ignoring".

Nobody can tell which massacres are fit for Britain's moral crusade and which are not. Why Sierra Leone and Kosovo and not the Congo, Sudan, Eritrea or Afghanistan? If protracted conflict leading to murder is the relevant criterion, why are British forces "ignoring" the Basques, the Chechens, the Punjabis, the Sri Lankans, the Burmese, and the Indonesians? At least Palmerston built a proper empire. Mr Cook's empire is that of the fidget, its colonies as unpredictable as they are transient.

Let us return to the Kurds. On Mr Cook's definition, they are ideally placed for intervention. Here is a classic "protracted conflict" astride Nato's vital frontier with the inflamed Middle East. Britain has a historic role in "Kurdistan" as party to the Great War settlement which promised 20 million Kurds their own state. Britain rattled on that promise when it seized the oil in Kurdish territory in northern Iraq. Yet Britain lent tacit support to Iraqi-Kurdish separatism in the years after the Gulf War and today has troops maintaining a "no-fly" zone over Kurdish land. What could be more glorious than for Tony Blair to take on the last unfinished business of 20th-century statecraft and grant the PKK its wish?

The Kurdish conflict also qualifies as a venue for potential ethnic massacre. The Turkish suppression of the PKK and that movement's bloody retaliation scream out for a Lancaster House conference. Turkey may then be a sovereign state, but so are Iraq and Yugoslavia. The Turkish Government may be elected and enjoy popular support against the PKK. But the same is true in Yugoslavia against the KLA. The Turkish leader, Bulent Ecevit, claims that moderate Kurds are appalled by the PKK, but President Milosevic claims the same of moderate Kosovans and the KLA. There are plenty of differences between Mr Ecevit and Mr Milosevic, but they share a determination not to see their countries dismembered. If British bombs are meant to bring the wild Mr Milosevic to his senses, how much more plausible that they will do the same for the sensible Mr Ecevit?

Each separatist conflict is peculiar to itself. But each evinces the same ferocity in nation states and their dissident minorities. That is why outsiders do well to steer clear.

Minorities so easily steal the thunder of majorities, as do violent minorities within minorities. British Unionists need no telling of this. The continuing stranglehold of the Provisional IRA on Ulster's so-called peace process is a classic of "minoritarianism".

The Turks have succeeded in keeping PKK violence contained within the politics of a hesitantly democratic state. Yet by reacting violently to the arrest of their leader, the PKK has been able to command worldwide attention. Such violence instantly engages world sympathy and intervention. Already the Foreign Office is "urging" Turkey to try Mr Ocalan "in strict accordance with the rule of law and due process". And what if it does not? Thus do all interventions begin. This weekend the KLA negotiators at Rambouillet hope to finesse the RAF into giving air cover for their attacks on Serb targets, a ludicrous trap into which Britain has fallen. But if the KLA, why not the PKK? Britain used to send humanitarian aid to the world's troublespots. It now sends high explosive.

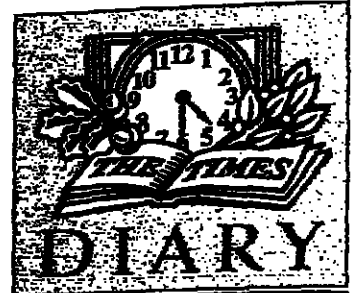
Such politico-military intervention is image-led. It does not count votes or laws, only bodies. Nor is it concerned with outcomes. As those immersed in conflicts round the globe are discovering, the new world order has the attention span of a gnat. Mr Cook's "responsible foreign policy of a civilised nation" is turned vision, mostly television. The camera can be a powerful agent of awareness. As a force for good it stimulates great charity, but it can also induce an obsessional *Something Must Be Done*.

Such macho morality can handle only so much outrage at a time. Its ethical agenda is full of Kosovo just now. But keep up the pressure. Kurdistan, the West has you on hold. Don't stop the violence or we will lose interest. Every burning embassy lights the yellow brick road to the Wizard of Cook. Outside intervention will not bring victory. The Kurds will no more win than will the Kosovans, but by golly Britain will have fun at their expense. As for 3,000 British troops now embarking for Kosovo, they had better start thinking Anatolia. Kosovo will soon fall. Mount Ararat beckons. To your shelters, Turks.

comment@the-times.co.uk



Simon Jenkins



Armed livery

ONCE it was said that anything one desired, one could buy at Harrods. Now Mohamed Al Fayed seems intent on making this a reality by going into the arms trade.

He is expanding his empire by registering the Harrods trademark with the European Union. Included in the list of services and products upon which he wishes to guarantee his intellectual property are side arms, firearms, ammunition, projectiles and explosives.

"We are clean out of armaments," says Laurie Meyer, Mo's helper. "But we have to draw the line: we are not about to start stocking tanks in Harrods livery."

ROUGH being royal, what with parties, palaces, and Civil Lists. "I've been brought up to believe life isn't fair," says the Princess Royal.

Fit for office

JACK STRAW's enthusiasm for confronting "yobs" may have been inspired by a new fitness regime that is seeing him spend longer at the Westminster gym. So regularly does he toil with treadmills, bikes, weights and "boxercise to music" classes, that the Home Secretary has been awarded "bronze" in the club's table of dedicated members, just a couple of puffs behind the retiring Paddy Ashdown.

HARD shoulder rather than off-the-shoulder for relatively Posh Spice, Victoria Adams (below). The singer has had a spot of engine



trouble on the A1. She was cruising with her Mum in the family Porsche when it broke down and had to be towed away. An AA type said: "I thought Posh was pretty, but her mother's even nicer."

Waiting game

THE hospital which received the PM's seal of approval recently has been less hospitable to one of its MPs. Lindsay Hoyle has hobbled to St Thomas's with a bashed leg after hearing his master's praise.

He was told to expect a three-hour wait, so he drove 200 miles to a hospital in his Chorley constituency. "It was quicker to drive four hours up North where I was treated in an hour," says Hoyle. "I was home in bed by midnight."



OXFORD University Press has a novel excuse for the demise of its poetry list. Keith Thomas, the chairman of its finance committee, has explained that scholars no longer have time to write dry tracts as they cannot afford servants and must do their own domestic chores.

Police video

SHOTS of the Royal Family off-duty are to be aired courtesy of the police. The *Unseen Royal Family*, scheduled by ITV to grace our television screens in April, will show film taken by rozzers who guarded the family.

Loyal royal guardians have responded to ITV advertisements in police journals seeking "an insight into the family's most intimate moments". Royals, surprised that there are any "intimate moments" left, are alarmed. "We have offered factual help, but no more than that," mutters Buckingham Palace.

TO Quentin Crewe's memorial service with his "pushers" (wheel-chair helpers) and, as his nephew Bamber Gascoigne noted, a sequence of attractive "aunts". They recalled a trip in a Mini with Sandie Shaw, Mick Jagger and Lord Snowdon. Just how many celebrities can you fit into a Mini?

JASPER GERARD

'The notion that English is going to the dogs is no more than defecation by a miniature poodle'

Letters to the Ed are the global e-mail of the scribbling and spluttering classes. The words: "I shall write a letter to The Times" still rise bubbling to the lips, not just of choleric old clutmen these days, but of all sorts, colours and sexes of the opinionated, didactic and witty. Thank Hermes, God of Disputation.

But the correspondence that we are running (and running) about the intimations of old age has missed the point, so far. Evidence of growing older is not merely that editors are looking younger every day. Nor is it that one needs long-handled clippers designed for trimming the edges of lawns in order to cut one's toenails. Nor that the only glasses that you still do not need glasses is that you now drink straight out of the bottle. Nor that you puff when climbing the stairs. It is, of course, that you think that

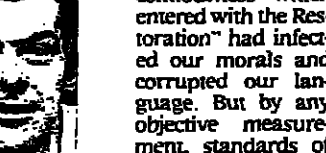
the world is going to the dogs. To think this, you do not have to be of an age at which your birthday cake has become a fire hazard. Young fogies still in their teens make a good living and pull the birds by pretending to believe it. And it may even be true of some things, such as the London Underground, English cricket/football/rugby/athletics and the Olympic movement, all of which have within living memory deteriorated from fine institutions to bad jokes. But the notion that English is going to the dogs is no more than defecation by a miniature poodle. The miniature turn your back on such crap, she does a poodle. And the notion that the young cannot speak or write properly any more is another wooden-headed language myth.

Members of the history society of New Hall, Cambridge (Queen of the Colleges), whom I had the

honour to address this week, speak and write far better and more entertainingly than we did at their age. They also do it with more flair. Perhaps they cannot spell "eschscholt(zia)" and "diarrhoea" without pausing for a flicker of thought [NB Fiona, please make sure that we spell these correctly]. But spelling is a trivial, mechanical accomplishment. If Cambridge is really so concerned about the alleged decline of undergraduate literacy, it should introduce a spelling exam into the Tripos. But I bet that it won't.

The complaints that English is going to the dogs from some mythical Golden Age have been made since at least the 17th century. Jonathan Swift, like

some modern reactionary doomsters, connected the dogishness with the immorality of the young. "Licentiousness which entered with the Restoration" had infected our morals and corrupted our language. But by any objective measurement, standards of English have improved. In 1850 in England and Wales 31 per cent of bridegrooms and 46 per cent of brides could not write their names in the marriage register. Now all the young get a secondary education, and a third of the relevant age-group get a tertiary education. Maybe they are not all Shakespeares. And of course I was meeting an academic elite at New Hall. But those who com-



Philip Howard

plain that the young are taking English to the dogs are either snobbish (concerned about the spread of vulgar "working-class" accents, ie. not cut-crystal Yaah drawls), or they are frightened of change and jealous of the young.

They are also unkind to dogs. Shakespeare is responsible, I think, for this slander on silly woodens. I think that he was (predictably and sensibly) a cat lover. You may believe that Shakespeare was anything you want, and find evidence for it in his work. Rosalind, Othello and Macbeth provide the first examples in English of the metaphor that throwing something to the dogs is to rubbish it. Homer and the New Testament have kinder images of dogs as friends of man. Dogs in literature were originally scavengers. Until Argos, the ancient hound of Odysseus. He



FOOD WARS

The other risks from the GM fiasco

Governments need stiff resolve when faced with any food or health scare. Impetuous action to satisfy public alarm can have disastrous, long-term consequences. The current furore over genetically modified (GM) crops and food is no different. Bending to public concern by placing a moratorium on their commercial growth or sale, as green activists wish, could have disastrous ramifications for prosperity and world trade. The letter published yesterday by five Cabinet Ministers displays an awareness of the potential benefits GM technology can bring, but its release into an environment already affected by hysteria does not bode well for progress.

The different reception that GM foods have received in America and Europe could hardly be more marked. More than 12 million hectares of GM crops were planted in America in 1997. By next year, this area may have tripled. With a fifth of all their corn and half their soya being genetically modified, Americans appear to believe the assurances of the Food and Drug Administration that GM crops are safe to grow and GM produce is safe to eat.

The first to benefit have been American farmers, whose yields of soya have increased by up to 5 per cent, while using less herbicide. Next is American industry itself, making money researching genetically engineered seeds, the market for which will be worth an estimated \$6 billion by 2005. The most crucial beneficiaries are consumers, who might soon be offered healthier and longer-lasting food at potentially lower prices.

Europe's populations prefer to look on the dark side of GM crops and food. Public caution of something "new", official scepti-

cism of the American research, and the European Union's antiquated system for regulating food safety threaten to hobble Europe's progress, marginalise farmers by denying them high-productivity GM crops, and deprive consumers of possible benefits. Austria, France and Luxembourg have already blocked the commercial growth of certain GM crops. The European Commission may challenge at least one of these decisions as an impediment to free trade.

Yet the Commission needs to respond with care. If it acts too heavily-handedly, an anti-GM food alliance could soon form among member states, undermining the Commission's authority and the single market. If it fails to act at all, tacitly giving its approval to the contravention of EU law, a bandwagon against GM food and crops could soon begin to roll. If European countries banned GM products without proving they are unsafe, the World Trade Organisation, backed by America's muscle, is bound to object. A dispute among scientists could become a trade war.

Other countries share Europe's ostrich-like approach to GM food and crops. Developing countries want the Biosafety Protocol, being negotiated this week in Colombia, to allow nations to ban or restrict import of GM organisms, ranging from pest-resistant corns and potatoes through to advanced pharmaceuticals and blue jeans (made from GM cotton). Yet these are the very countries which have so much to gain from genetic modification.

The development of GM crops has been unsettling. The seeds of mistrust have been sown in foreign and English fields. Ministers must be sensitive, but they should not bend too much with the wind.

KURDS IN GREECE

Athens pays the price of unreason

Nowhere has the Ocalan affair had a more devastating impact than in Greece. Across Europe Greek embassies have been sacked. Greek diplomats have been threatened by Kurdish demonstrators in more than 20 cities. Greece has been made to look both ludicrous and mendacious for its bungled attempt to shelter the PKK Kurdish leader while repeatedly denying that it was doing anything to help him. And now the Greek Government has paid a heavy price, with the resignation of Theodoros Pangalos, the Foreign Minister, and the Ministers of the Interior and Public Order. Costas Simitis, the Prime Minister, has been badly damaged, and the affair may lead to his removal.

Greece has brought this catastrophe on its own head. Its support for Abdullah Ocalan is a result of short-sighted policies that are guided more by emotion than reason and that have often cost the country so dear. Suspicion of Turkey and hostility to whatever government holds office in Ankara have long been the main issues determining policy in Athens: the old Greek words hysteria and paranoia aptly characterise the relationship. The Kurdish revolt was seen by some politicians as a way of tying down the Turkish Army, an important aim in the confrontations with Ankara over the Aegean and Cyprus. And Mr Ocalan, the leader of the revolt, was therefore hailed as a hero who was not only battling against Turkish oppression but also serving a useful political purpose.

Acting on the principle of "my enemy's enemy is my friend" may win votes; but it makes for poor statesmanship. Greece knew that open backing of the PKK was a provocation that could trigger an incalculable

Turkish response, and Mr Simitis steered a careful course between support for Kurdish aspirations and caution in not endorsing PKK violence. But the murky involvement of the Greek Ambassador to Kenya, the attempt to give refuge to Mr Ocalan and the use of forged passports and diplomatic subterfuge have ruined this policy. Greece now stands accused of the very kind of backing for terrorism that it would be swift to denounce from any fellow European Union member.

Mr Pangalos, a political heavyweight often too outspoken for ministerial office, had to go. So, probably, did the others who resigned. But although Mr Simitis called for their departures, this does not lessen the pressure on him, from both Left and Right. Senior Pasok politicians, who dream of inheriting the Papandreou crown, have never forgiven Mr Simitis — not only for beating them to the premiership but for betraying the crusty, nationalist, idiosyncratic Papandreou legacy. They see him as a Major diluting the Thatcher revolution. They mask their left-wing animus under the guise of defending Greek national interests, a populist cause embraced also by the opposition Right.

The isolation of Mr Simitis is bad for Greece. A pragmatist and moderate, he needs domestic as well as foreign support to try to steer his country and party into policies for the next century. A ray of good news is his appointment of George Papandreou, son of the former Prime Minister, to succeed Mr Pangalos. He is one of the most moderate and intelligent men in the Cabinet. But it will be hard for both of them to restore Greek pride and voter confidence after the Ocalan fiasco.

WAR IN THE HORN

Neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea can win a military victory

Last summer the world was baffled by a brief, intense war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Months of futile peace and unproductive negotiation followed. Two weeks ago the war flared again. Yesterday a troika of EU ambassadors arrived in the Horn of Africa to add impetus to efforts to end hostilities. They deserve our sympathy and support. The belligerents' accusations and counter-accusations have combined with limited press access to create an extraordinarily confused situation where little is clear other than the fact of the violence itself. There is a basis for a ceasefire — an 11-point plan drawn up by the Organisation for African Unity, based on American and Rwandan mediatory proposals made last summer, with EU and UN Security Council backing. But Eritrea will not implement it and while one party is so dogmatically opposed, the process cannot prosper.

The sticking point is the plan's stipulation that Eritrean troops must withdraw from disputed territory. The land is Eritrean, says Asmara: sovereignty must be decided before any withdrawal, which would leave its people subject to the authority of a state which expels Eritrean migrants and has unilaterally broken the American-brokered moratorium on air attacks. Addis Ababa, meanwhile, claims Asmara mounted a premeditated invasion which no settlement should recognise. A return to the *status quo ante* — Ethiopian administration and no Eritrean military presence — is the only option. Though the factual bases of their respective positions may be impossible to verify, the positions themselves are clearly incompatible. And

each side is too proud to back down. Yet the fact that much of the fighting has been on undisputed territory shows that the border dispute is the symptom, not the cause. Eritrea is a proud, prickly, highly militarised society, quick to overreact to any perceived slight, which has fought each of its neighbours since independence in 1993, and undoubtedly resents Ethiopia's faster economic growth. Ethiopia, on the other hand, is overly sensitive because the contested territory is in Tigré — the symbolic province of Aksum and Adowa, and the home of the core of President Meles Zenawi's Tigrayan People's Liberation Front-based Government.

Its underlying fear is denial of access to the Red Sea. It renounced a coastline by giving Eritrea independence, assuming a friendly Asmara: when the latter introduced its currency, it threatened to move outside Addis Ababa's control. President Zenawi's subsequent overreaction created the tension which fanned last summer's border dispute. That same fear may be behind its recent bombing of Asaba's water supply, destruction of which would render the exposed Red Sea port vulnerable to a siege. The war may yet escalate.

Victory is impossible. Neither side is likely to shift positions on the OAU plan without substantial external pressure. Both countries are poor. Perhaps the best that the EU troika can hope for is to try to find a different basis for a ceasefire, with acceptance encouraged by the judicious application of financial sticks. Only when the two sides persuade themselves — or are persuaded — that peace is in their interests will the guns fall silent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Ethical and social questions raised by GM crops

From Professor Ian Kennedy,
Chairman of the Nuffield
Council on Bioethics

Sir, Fourteen months ago this council invited Professor Alan Ryan, the distinguished Oxford philosopher, to chair a working party to consider the ethical and social implications of developments in genetically modified crops. The report of this working party is now near completion and the council will publish it in May. It will address such issues as food safety, the environment, biodiversity, commercialisation, consumer choice, regulation and the interests and needs of developing countries. It will contain recommendations for policymakers.

The intensity of the debate about genetically modified food (GMF) makes it clear that the complex issues about its implications require careful evaluation and illustrates the dangers of judgments being hastily made in the glare of publicity. For the public, trying to reconcile or balance the viewpoints of industry, environmentalists and government under these conditions is an almost impossible task. We hope that our report will provide that careful evaluation.

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics is independent. This is important. The current debate on GMF suggests that the public wants impartial analysis and advice in which it can have confidence. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust, the council produces searching, widely disseminated reports on questions raised by advances in biology and biomedicine.

Our experience suggests that these can make a more helpful and lasting contribution to informing the public and developing public policy than the present stream of instant, and often intemperate comment.

Yours faithfully,
IAN KENNEDY,
Chairman,
Nuffield Council on Bioethics,
28 Bedford Square, WC1B 3EG.
February 17.

From Professor Thomas Lehner
and Dr Julian Ma

Sir, Publicity about genetically modified food should not be confused with the technology utilised for medical purposes.

There is extensive published evidence that plants can be genetically modified to produce a variety of vaccines and antibodies that will prevent bacterial or viral infections. Those investigations are carried out under strictly controlled laboratory conditions and they are seen as one of the most promising future developments in controlling microbial disease.

In this country, Europe, the US and Japan vaccines administered by mouth have priority over injection. This will be achieved either by oral administration of a vaccine produced in genetically modified edible plants (for example, bananas, tomatoes, etc), or by using purified extracts from suitable plants.

Transgenic plants are being studied to generate preventive vaccines in common infections, such as hepatitis, dental caries, Aids and diarrhoea, to mention only a few. The benefit of low-cost, easy storage and simple mode of administration is self-evident in making vaccines readily available to all, especially in developing countries, and eliminating the fear of the needle.

The public needs to be aware of the immense benefits that derive from the medicinal application of transgenic plant biotechnology in preventing infectious diseases, which are the most common causes of mortality and morbidity.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS LEHNER,
JULIAN MA,
Guy's, King's and
St Thomas' Hospital
Medical and Dental School,
London Bridge, SE1 9RT.
thomas.lehner@kcl.ac.uk
February 18.

From Mr Barnaby Hannam

Sir, Most of the concern regarding genetically modified crops seems focused on the safety of the food which they produced.

More thought should surely be given to the fact that, sprayed as intended, these crops will have no weeds and hence no host plants for the innumerable insects, spiders and assorted bugs which normally inhabit our fields. As a cereal farmer, I should be happy to use such crops; but somehow I am uneasy.

Maybe we should also ponder over bees collecting nectar for honey from such crops?

Yours sincerely,
BARNABY HANNAM,
West Sevington Farm,
Yatton Keynell,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7LE.
February 16.

From Mrs Dorothy Tucker

Sir, I have no interest in what Tony Blair chooses to eat.

I am interested in my right to choose what my husband, my family and I eat.

Yours faithfully,
DOROTHY TUCKER,
17 Henniker Gate,
Chelmer Village, Chelmsford,
Essex CM2 6QH.
February 16.

From Mr John O'Leary

Sir, How can Tony Blair be so certain that GM is safe? Look what it did to the Labour Party.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN O'LEARY,
56 Kenilworth Drive,
Croxley Green, Rickmansworth,
Hertfordshire WD3 3NW.
john@oleary.freeserve.co.uk
February 16.

Tories and compassion

From Mr Oliver Kamm

Sir, Your report (February 16) that William Hague is determined to "reach out" and to "recapture from the Left the words like caring, like compassion", nicely illustrates the intellectual confusion that characterises the modern Conservative Party.

Compassion is among the most desirable of personal virtues and dangerous of political affectations. The task of government is not to assuage emotional pain; it is to set disinterestedly the rules we live by. Economic redistribution is justified, indeed necessary, to the extent that it enables citizens to exercise autonomous choices within that framework of rules. That is not compassion; it is equity.

Among the reasons for the Left's electoral recovery has been its evenhanded realisation that government has a limit, as well as a role, in promoting that end. Mr Hague is apparently determined to forget the same point.

Yours faithfully,
OLIVER KAMM,
39 Calthorpe Street, WC1X 0JX.
February 16.

Fox in distress

From Ms Sharon Kyrke-Smith

Sir, Richard Edwards, the vet, may well have found himself with a very stressed fox which had been rescued after a hunt (report, February 17), but may I suggest that for a wild animal, which had never had any human contact, to be bundled up and driven to his surgery might well have been the principal cause of "a racing heart, no colour in its gums and blood in its urine".

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,
SHARON KYRKE-SMITH,
197 Grove Lane, SE5 8BP.
February 17.

From Mr Clifford Chatterton

Sir, Now we are provided with information that foxes can have stress when hunted, should we not also be advised what chickens feel like when foxes raid their pens?

Yours faithfully,
CLIFFORD CHATTERTON,
608 Lambton Lane,
Berkshire Lakes,
Naples, Florida 34104.
ncl0126@naples.net
February 17.

Hot on the trail

From Mr R. E. Hurst

Sir, Lord Rees-Mogg, writing today about the Clinton case, says of Kenneth Starr that "he was trotting, like a bloodhound with double cataracts, after a red herring".

Come back Sam Goldwyn — all is forgiven.

Yours sincerely,
R. E. HURST,
20 Esk Gardens,
Wetherby LS22 7UR.
February 15.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Heeding health risks

From Dr A. M. Monro

Sir, Your report of February 8, headed "Public scorn advice over food safety", highlights the ironic paradox of trying to impart the best scientific knowledge (whether endorsed by the Government or not) on health matters to the public at large.

While nearly one third of the population persists in smoking itself into chronic illness and an early death (despite the strongest recommendations against the use of tobacco), what hope can there be that the population will pay more attention to advice on the true risks associated with consumption of various foods?

The accompanying report, "Health fears may be overdue", correctly suggests that most health hazards from food arise from campylobacter, salmonella and *E. coli* and that eating

beef and genetically modified foods is amongst the safest things one can do. It might also have gone on to say that not only do pesticide residues in food pose an infinitesimally small (and obviously acceptable) risk, but that a case can actually be made for an increased use of pesticides in the production of fruit and vegetables.

This would have the effect of reducing the price of these foodstuffs and anything that can be done to encourage an increased consumption of them would have indisputable major health benefits in the prevention of cancer and other age-related diseases. All this is well documented in the scientific and medical literature.

Yours faithfully,
ALASTAIR MONRO,
Wisteria House,
Coombe Lane, Ash,
Kent CT3 2BS.
February 9.

The benefit of burning

From Professor Philip Stott

Sir, It was a pleasure to read the balanced comments of your Horticulture Correspondent, Alan Toogood, on the role of controlled fires in tropical vegetation (article, "Orchids rise like phoenix from the ashes at Kew", February 15).

By contrast, a great deal of media reporting of environmental fires, controlled and uncontrolled, suffers from a dangerous combination of millennium eco-type and a serious misreading of other people's landscapes.

In the Tropics fire, properly used, is a friend not an enemy, and in many environments it is vital for the functioning of the system. Moreover, the Tropics have always burned, including the forests, from before a hominid wielded a fire stick.

Current claims that tropical fires are a major factor in fuelling perceived global warming are both specious and immoral in their attempt to transfer the blame to developing countries. Fire is also a

major tool for managing the patchiness and biodiversity of tropical ecosystems.

Your Horticulture Correspondent is therefore right to emphasise the role of fires in maintaining lowland forests. Perhaps we can now expect fewer headlines of the genre "Fires the greatest ecological disaster the world has seen".

Unfortunately, I doubt it. Such subtlety is not on the agenda of many Western journalists, who lack the innate understanding of West African novelist, Chinua Achebe, writing in *Anthills of the Savannah* (Heinemann, 1987).

The trees had become hydra-headed bronze statues so ancient that only blunt features remained on their faces, like anthills surviving to tell the new grass of the savannah about last year's brush fires.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP STOTT,
(Professor of Biogeography,
University of London),
24 Clarence Place, Windmill Hill,
Gravesend, Kent DA12 1LD.
stott2@compuserve.com
February 15.

OUP's scholarly record

From the Chief Executive
of Macmillan

Sir, Whilst I, along with all other publishers, have enormous respect for the Oxford University Press's scholarly projects, Henry Reece is wrong to suggest (letter, February 9; see also letters, February 11 and 12) that his company is alone in the field.

Macmillan's investment in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and the 34-volume *Dictionary of Art* has averaged £5 million in each of the last five years. In addition, we are investing in many other large-scale projects.

Furthermore, the Government may not "support" OUP directly, but Macmillan, along with most scholarly publishers, pays corporation tax. OUP is exempt by virtue of its university status. Tax exemption is surely a form of government support.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CHARKIN,
Chief Executive, Macmillan
(and OUP employee, 1975-88),
25 Euston Place, SW1W 9NF.
richard@macmillan.co.uk
February 12.

Luvvies' labours

From Sir Peter Hall

Sir, Public spats between luvvies must be the least interesting form of life to Times readers. But the public accusation that I am a betrayer (producer Bill Kenwright's description of me, interview, Arts, February 4), must be answered, and answered publicly.

Kenwright indicated to me that he would have liked me to walk out of the current Old Vic revival of *Amadeus* in its last week of rehearsal, or to have threatened to do so. I would then have left Peter Shaffer, David Suchet, Michael Sheen and a wonderful cast (many of whom I have worked with for 35 years) in the lurch.

I believe that Kenwright wanted to improve the terms of his deal as co-producer of the play in America. I was not prepared to be used as a negotiating pawn, nor to behave unprofessionally. As a consequence, my company has closed down.

Yours sincerely,
PETER HALL,
The Peter Hall Company,
Piccadilly Theatre,
Denman Street, W1V 8DY.
February 5.

'Veil of secrecy' on doctors' standards

From Professor John Spiers

Sir, There are two vital elements missing from the General Medical Council's proposals for improving the regulation of doctors (report, later editions, February 11).

First, we should expect the publication of information on the general pattern of performance of individual doctors. How many women would have allowed themselves to be referred to the disgraced gynaecologist in Kent (reports, September 15-17, 1998) and how many parents would have allowed their children to be referred to the Bristol doctors (letter, February 16) if death rates and other comparative data had been openly published? There is a real question for patients: am I being referred to "Dr Up-to-date" or to "Dr Deadwood"? How can I tell before I accept treatment?

Second, we need an independent inspectorate, staffed by medical professionals but chaired by an informed lay person. The issue is not only the recovery of public confidence in doctors in general. It is to ensure that individual and specific practice is to the highest standards.

An independent inspectorate should routinely check any case where a clinical issue arises. It should have the legal power to require post-mortems. It should check practice at random, too: motorway cameras change behaviour — a clinical equivalent could much improve medical services.

Self-regulation is insufficient: either the doctors do not have the necessary information, which is a concern, or they do or will have it, in which case why maintain the veil of secrecy? After all we, the patients, own our bodies. And we, the taxpayers, pay the bills.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SPIERS
(Chairman, The Patients
Association, 1995-97),
The Gate Cottage,
Twylford, Birch Grove,
Haywards Heath, Sussex RH17 7DJ.
February 11.

From Mr Denis Dooley, FRCS

Sir, I understand that the proposed inspectors of doctors' performance will be expected to listen to "whistle-blowers".

May I suggest that encouragement should also be given to members of the public to record and inform the inspecting authority of the excellent work done by individual GPs, consultants and nurses from day to day. We might call these people "trumpet-blowers".

Sincerely,
DENIS DOOLEY,
7 Murray Road,
Wimbledon, SW19 4PD.
February 12.

From Mr Peter Wade

Sir, Competence tests for doctors. Will this include handwriting?

Yours faithfully,
PETER WADE,
12 Bell Close,
Colchester, Essex CO2 8EP.
February 11.

Doing penance

From Mr Mike Prymaka

Sir, Lack of any mention of pancakes in *The Times* on Shrove Tuesday reminded me of a comment in the regional mess suggestions book on this day many years ago: "Since our cooks have chosen not to celebrate Shrove Tuesday in traditional style, may we request that they similarly ignore Ash Wednesday?"

Yours faithfully,
MIKE PRYMAKA,
The Yewes,
Cootes Lane, Fen Drayton,
Cambridgeshire CB4 5SL.
prymaka@aol.com
February 11.

Knot rated

From Mr John G. Tate

Sir, Thank you for your letter regretting that you were unable to publish one of mine. As I read it my bow-tie began to wilt.

Nevertheless, this does not prevent me from offering hearty congratulations to Professor Ian Fells, who not only started the bow-tie correspondence (February 5), but a few days later (letter, February 10) gave us his interesting thoughts on nuclear power.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN G. TATE,
4 High View,
Hedley on the Hill, Stockfield,
Northumberland NE43 7TD.
February 13.

True enough

From Mr Bryan Marson-Smith

Sir, A small piece of social history: my grandson, aged just four, pointed to a red roadside telephone kiosk and observed: "That's where you go if you don't have a mobile."

Yours faithfully,
B. MARSON-SMITH,
Fairseat, Gracious Lane,
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1TD.
February 18.



BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 19 1999

Treasury's £1bn gain from mis-selling

THE unravelling of the pensions mis-selling scandal is bolstering the Treasury coffers by up to £1 billion. Compensation paid by pensions providers to people rejoining public sector schemes after being mis-sold personal pensions is flowing straight to the Treasury, adding to the surplus in the public accounts.

"This is effectively another windfall tax," claimed Francis

Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, last night. "People will want to know how this money is being used to help their pensions." He will be tabling questions in Parliament demanding that the Treasury disclose the extent of the funds it is gaining this way.

The Bill for settling the first phase of the huge project for compensating victims of mis-selling is already heading to

wards £4 billion and industry sources estimate that at least a quarter of that could go to the Treasury. This is because most of the public sector pension schemes, such as those serving nurses and teachers, are not funded, relying instead on the Government paying the pensions as they arise.

A spokesman at the Government Actuaries Department described the extra inflow of

funds to the Treasury as "a nice little windfall in Gordon Brown's back pocket", estimating that virtually all the compensation from the first phase settlements would land with the Treasury in the current financial year. This week the Government revealed a net surplus of £12.4 billion in the public sector net cash requirement, leading the City to believe that Mr Brown would

have the resources to deliver a relatively generous Budget next month.

The Treasury says it does not have details of how much cash it has received from the pensions providers. However, officials stressed that any compensation paid into public schemes would be fully recouped in future benefits to pensioners. They also pointed out that there would have been an

outflow of funds from the Treasury when public sector workers opted out of their pension schemes and bought private pensions. But those payments would have been spread over several years and would have been very much smaller than the money now being paid in compensation.

Bacon & Woodrow, the pensions specialists, estimate that the final cost of settling the pen-

sions mis-selling debacle could be as high as £22 billion although some industry estimates put the figure at half that. The firm estimates that the eventual benefit to the Treasury could be more than £3 billion. That may be an over-estimate. So far, the National Health Services fund, for instance, has received only £330 million but many more claims are still being processed.

Halifax offers investors fresh windfall

By CAROLINE MERRELL
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HALIFAX plans to pay out a total of £1.5 billion to its 3.5 million shareholders.

The latest windfall was promised as the former building society reported that its profits for its first full year as a bank had risen by 7 per cent to £1.76 billion. However, the profit figure, after millennium costs and a £20 million provision for the pensions mis-selling review, was up only 3 per cent.

A shareholder with 350 shares should get £217 in June, although Halifax admitted that the scheme still needed to be approved by the Inland Revenue.

The bank hopes the payout will be treated as a capital payment by the Revenue, as this will mean most investors will not be liable to pay tax. If it is treated as an extra dividend, it will be subject to income tax.

James Crosby, Halifax's new chief executive, said the capital repayment would form part of the restructuring of the bank into four separate businesses under a new holding company. Under the capital repayment programme, for every 40 shares in Halifax, shareholders will be given 37 shares in the new company plus a payment of 62p a share.

Mr Crosby, who replaced Mike Blackburn at the beginning of the year, also laid out his plans for the bank, which has 21 million customers. Despite the payout, the bank still has excess cash of £1.5 billion.

Mr Crosby said that he hoped to deploy this within three years, either by returning it to shareholders or through making an acquisition. He said: "Our commitment to acquisition is unaffected by this programme. In no circumstances do we want to destroy the value of the business."

Halifax has acquired Clerical Medical and the Birmingham Midshires, the former building society. Mr Crosby said Halifax was interested in making a number of smaller acquisitions, rather than a big merger.

Halifax's share of net mortgage lending in the second half of the year was 11 per cent, but for the year as a whole it stood at just 5 per cent, reflecting increased competition from new players. Halifax's total market share of mortgages is 20 per cent. Earnings per share increased by 9 per cent to 47.5p and total dividend was raised by 16 per cent to 20.25p.

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William Hill forced to cut flotation price

By DOMINIC WALSH

THE recent resurgence of interest in the new issues market was brought crashing to earth yesterday as William Hill, the high street bookmaker, was forced to cut the price of its proposed £900 million flotation.

Warburg Dillon Read, the broker to the listing, was left red-faced after a lack of institutional interest compelled it to cut the offer price to 135p, well below the company's indication range of 155p to 175p. It is understood that the flotation was very close to being pulled altogether.

The lukewarm response from big investors was in stark contrast to that of the

general public, who were invited to apply for at least £1,000 of shares. The four share shops involved in the retail offer received more than 220,000 inquiries, and the number of shares available to small investors had been scaled up from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of the total.

The new flotation price values the bookmaker at £780 million, including debts of £375 million, compared with the £840 million to £900 million range contained in the flotation prospectus — a huge blow to Nomura International, its Japanese owner. The reduction has cut its profit by £90 million, while the bookmaker's top directors, John Brown and Bob Lambert, have seen

their personal windfalls more than halved to a combined £1.4 million.

Sources close to the process suggested last night that an aversion to the profits Nomura would have made on the deal was a big factor. At the middle price indicated by Warburg, Nomura would have made a profit of £170 million on its original investment of £200 million.

One source said: "The institutions were just not prepared to see Nomura turn that sort of profit in the space of just 15 months. This has huge implications for venture capitalists and other equity providers."

David Freud, managing director of Warburg Dillon Read, said recent events had

shown the new issues market to be "extremely fragile".

He pointed out that the share price of South African Breweries, which is moving its main listing to London, had fallen 15 per cent in Johannesburg over the past two weeks, although a spokesman for SAB said the roadshow had received "an encouraging response".

Mr Freud also linked William Hill's predicament to the difficulty of companies outside the FTSE 100 in attracting institutional support. He said: "It is extremely concerning that a good company with a solid management and good track record has to struggle like this. It is a concern if the London capital market is not

going to be an efficient source of capital for businesses."

Other sources close to Warburg were more forthright, describing the reaction as "totally irrational". One insider said: "Even at 135p it was impossible to get institutions to see you, let alone discuss the merits of the company. It's all very embarrassing."

Although the shock price cut is a setback for William Hill and its advisers, it could mean tasty profits for those allotted shares when conditional trading starts on February 22. A source close to Warburg said that at the revised price it had experienced no difficulty in finding buyers.

Commentary, page 29



Odds against: John Brown, chief executive, left and Bob Lambert, financial director, who have seen their windfalls halved by the cut in the flotation price

PPP in hospital referrals dispute

By JASON NISSE

PPP, the private healthcare company, faces protests by more than 300 leading consultants in a dispute over hospital referrals.

The London Consultants' Association, which represents 300 of the capital's top doctors, has written to PPP and the Office of Fair Trading protesting at PPP's policy of refusing to include many of London's private hospitals in its directory of approved centres. There are only ten Central London hospitals in the directory, four of which are owned by Columbia/PPP, a joint venture in which PPP has a 49 per cent stake.

The OFT will investigate the complaints as part of a wider inquiry into the

provision of private health care in the UK. Doctors claim PPP and Bupa use their power as insurers to gain business.

The latest battle stems from PPP's refusal to include the new £45 million Heart Hospital in Harley Street in its directory. Anthony Rickards, a consultant cardiologist, has said that PPP's stand on the hospital could result in "clinical tragedy". He cited one case where PPP insisted that a patient was transferred to the Harley Street Clinic, a Columbia/PPP hospital, which was unable to treat him.

Adrian Bull, medical director of PPP, rejected the claims that PPP was restricting choice and potentially endangering life.

Arnault to sue Gucci over new shares

By FRASER NELSON

BERNARD ARNAULT, chairman of LVMH, is to sue Gucci in an attempt to prove that the Italian fashion house has illegally created new shares to stop him exerting any power on its board.

After five weeks of building up a 34.4 per cent stake in Gucci, M Arnault has decided to go hostile — ensuring he can appoint an LVMH-nominated director into its Milan head office.

Domenico De Sole, Gucci chief executive, yesterday created 20 million shares which will be controlled by a separate company trust — commanding a 25.6 per cent stake in the company.

This dilutes LVMH's stake in Gucci from 34.5 per cent to an identical 25.6 per

cent. This means the new trust can cancel any votes cast by LVMH when they decide whether to accept a new director.

Signor De Sole said: "M Arnault wants his director to be the eyes and ears of LVMH in Gucci. If he wants to make a full bid, we will talk to him. But if he does not, we must protect ourselves."

M Arnault believes that, under its Amsterdam listing laws, Gucci can only create new shares in the "shareholders' interests". He believes it has violated this condition.

LVMH owns a stable of luxury brands including Kenzo and Givenchy.

Unwanted designs, page 31

Hopes of rate cut fall after retail sales leap

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

AGGRESSIVE January sales discounts lured shoppers back to the high street after dismal Christmas trading, according to figures published yesterday.

Retail sales volumes jumped by 1.1 per cent last month after falling by 0.8 per cent in December, according to the Office for National Statistics.

John O'Sullivan, economist with Greenwich NatWest, said: "Growth was driven primarily by strength in the clothing and footwear and household goods sectors, where price cuts were even larger than they were a year ago."

The City yesterday concluded that the figures were probably strong enough, along with this week's news of another fall in unemployment, to persuade the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee to leave interest rates unchanged next month.

However, the data still pointed to considerable relative weakness on the high street. Francesca Massone, a Goldman Sachs economist, said that taking December and January together gave a better indication of consumer demand. Sales growth over the two months was 1 per cent, still very weak compared with the 6 per cent recorded a year ago.

Taking the three months to January, volumes rose by only 1.5 per cent on the same period a year ago, the lowest quarterly increase for almost three years despite aggressive discounting in the sales.

The City remains confident that more interest rate cuts are on the way. A Treasury compilation of 28 independent forecasts yesterday showed that the average expectation is for underlying inflation to under-shoot its 2.5 per cent target and stand at 2.2 per cent in the 1999 and 2000 fourth quarters.

Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, last night said that the MPC would consider cutting rates again if the world economic situation were to worsen. He also said that the MPC was "reasonably confident that the [British] slowdown will be relatively mild and short-lived".

Separate data yesterday showed bank and building society lending still growing steadily. The British Bankers' Association said total sterling lending to the private sector rose by £3.2 billion in January, in line with the average of recent months. The Building Societies Association said gross mortgage advances were £1.26 billion in January, against £1.49 billion in December, a rise after seasonal adjustment.

M4 broad money supply's year-on-year growth rate fell to 7.3 per cent in January, from 8 per cent in December.

Business Today

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Prescriptions for the NHS
Would you buy shares in the health service?
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STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6074.8	(-3.5)
FTSE 100	2,624	(-1.1)
FTSE All Share	2779.17	(-1.1)
Nikkei	14146.79	(-11.82)
Dow Jones	9243.45	(-47.98)
S&P Composite	1230.14	(-5.4)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(4.75%)
Long bond	5.87%	(5.87%)
3-month	5.39%	(5.39%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	n/a	(5.75%)
Life long bill	116.38	(117.05)

STERLING

New York	1.8340	(1.8356)
London	1.8335	(1.8356)
Frankfurt	1.8335	(1.8356)
Paris	1.8335	(1.8356)
Madrid	1.8335	(1.8356)
Stockholm	1.8335	(1.8356)
Oslo	1.8335	(1.8356)
Amsterdam	1.8335	(1.8356)
Brussels	1.8335	(1.8356)
Geneva	1.8335	(1.8356)
Zurich	1.8335	(1.8356)
Basel	1.8335	(1.8356)
Frankfurt	1.8335	(1.8356)
Paris	1.8335	(1.8356)
Madrid	1.8335	(1.8356)
Stockholm	1.8335	(1.8356)
Oslo	1.8335	(1.8356)
Amsterdam	1.8335	(1.8356)
Brussels	1.8335	(1.8356)
Geneva	1.8335	(1.8356)
Zurich	1.8335	(1.8356)
Basel	1.8335	(1.8356)

US DOLLAR

London	1.1225	(1.1253)
Frankfurt	1.1225	(1.1253)
Paris	1.1225	(1.1253)
Madrid	1.1225	(1.1253)
Stockholm	1.1225	(1.1253)
Oslo	1.1225	(1.1253)
Amsterdam	1.1225	(1.1253)
Brussels	1.1225	(1.1253)
Geneva	1.1225	(1.1253)
Zurich	1.1225	(1.1253)
Basel	1.1225	(1.1253)

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (May)	\$10.40	(\$10.30)
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GOLD

London close	\$285.75	(\$284.75)
denotes midday trading prices		
Exchange rates		Page 28

3i restates interest in Electra

3i, the venture capital investment trust, yesterday reassessed its interest in buying its rival, the Electra Investment Trust (Robert Cole writes).

In a formal statement to the Stock Exchange 3i confirmed that it had indicated to Electra's board that it was willing to pay 70p a share for the company — or £1.2 billion in total.

It added: "3i remains interested in acquiring Electra, or its assets." A spokesman for Electra criticised the statement because it contained nothing new. He added that the 70p offer was "feeble in the extreme".

3i said that it was waiting for the Electra board to contact it to resume merger talks. However, the Electra spokesman said: "The ball is right at the back of 3i's court. All they need to do is look for it."

Re-affirmation of the takeover interest came a day after Electra proposed a plan to wind itself up, a proposal partly designed to counter 3i's bid.

Commentary page 29

BIGWIG

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Rank bullish despite drop in profits

By DOMINIC WALSH

SIR DENYS HENDERSON, the embattled Rank Group chairman, admitted yesterday that it had been a tough year, but rejected suggestions that investors' best hope of recouping their money was a break-up.

Unveiling a big drop in 1998 profits, he conceded that the second half of the year — culminating in Andrew Tate's removal as chief executive with an £870,000 payoff — had been "bloody awful". However, he claimed that the £2 billion spent over the past three years would "impact positively in 1999".

Last September, in the wake of Mr Tate's resignation, the company received an informal approach from John Garrett, a former director, over a possible £900 million bid for the leisure division, including Odeon cinemas and Tom Cobleigh pubs. But Sir Denys said there had been no further contact from Mr Garrett, adding: "We are not about to do

any fire sales, because that would be absolutely crazy." Douglas Yates, acting chief executive until Mike Smith arrives in April, also dismissed persistent speculation that credit notes taken out at the time of the sale of its stake in Xerox were a "poison pill", preventing a break-up of Rank. He added that the credit notes, covering deferred payments of £440 million of the £940 million sale price, may be switched to the insurance market. "We believe it could be cheaper for the insurance market to cover this than the banking market," he said.

Yesterday Rank reported a cut in profits before tax and exceptional items from £303 million to £255 million from turnover up 2.2 per cent to £2.06 billion. Despite a drop in earnings per share to 23p (36.5p), the group maintained its final dividend at 12.75p, making 18.5p (18p). After a reasonable first half of the year, the second half was hit by a combination of weakening consumer confidence, the disruptive effects of

refurbishments and, most embarrassingly, an inability by its Deluxe video duplication arm to cope with huge demand for copies of *Titanic*. Including exceptional items, the pre-tax loss was £51 million, the biggest hit being a £141 million write-off against the value of its US resorts arm, which was put up for sale last year. Mr Yates said that the business, now worth less than £60 million, would probably be sold "in three or four chunks". He added that the recent sale

Glaxo share options 'could cost £900m'

By PAUL DURMAN

GLAXO WELLCOME would be forced to take a charge of at least £900 million in its accounts if the pharmaceutical group were to follow Boots in recognising the true cost of share options granted to employees.

Boots this week announced plans to acknowledge that the new shares issued to dilute the exercise of options dilutes the profits available for other shareholders. Buying shares to cover outstanding options could reduce this year's profits by £63 million, it estimated.

With 90 million options in issue with an average price of about £10, and with its shares trading above £20, Glaxo Wellcome would face a much bigger charge. However, John Coombe, finance director, said: "We have no plans to go out into the marketplace and buy those in."

Analysts were strongly impressed with Glaxo Wellcome's results announced yesterday, which showed it struggling off the loss of £800 million of sales from Zantac and Zovirax, the big-selling drugs that lost their patent protection in 1997.

The group's pre-tax profits for 1998 of £2.7 billion represented a 5 per cent increase at constant exchange rates. Sales of £8 billion also showed an underlying improvement of 4 per cent.

Bob Ingram, chief executive, said: "We have come through the biggest patent expiry our industry has ever seen. This is a tremendous achievement by anyone's standards."

Zantac, the ulcer treatment that once dominated the group, now represents only 9 per cent of sales. Excluding Zovirax and Zantac, sales grew by 17 per cent, and by 23 per cent in the important American market.

Sir Richard Sykes, the chairman, said Glaxo Wellcome would grow sales and earnings by 10 per cent or more this year at constant exchange rates. The continuing strong growth of products such as Flixotide and Serenit for asthma, Combivir for HIV and Wellbutrin for depression will be supported by new medicines to treat HIV, hepatitis B and influenza.

Sir Richard said modern drug development technology will hugely reduce the attrition rate of potential new drugs over the next ten years. He said between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of drugs taken into human trials will reach the market — against only about 10 per cent today.

After three years of holding back spending on research and development, Glaxo Wellcome's spend this year will rise from £1.6 billion to about £1.3 billion.

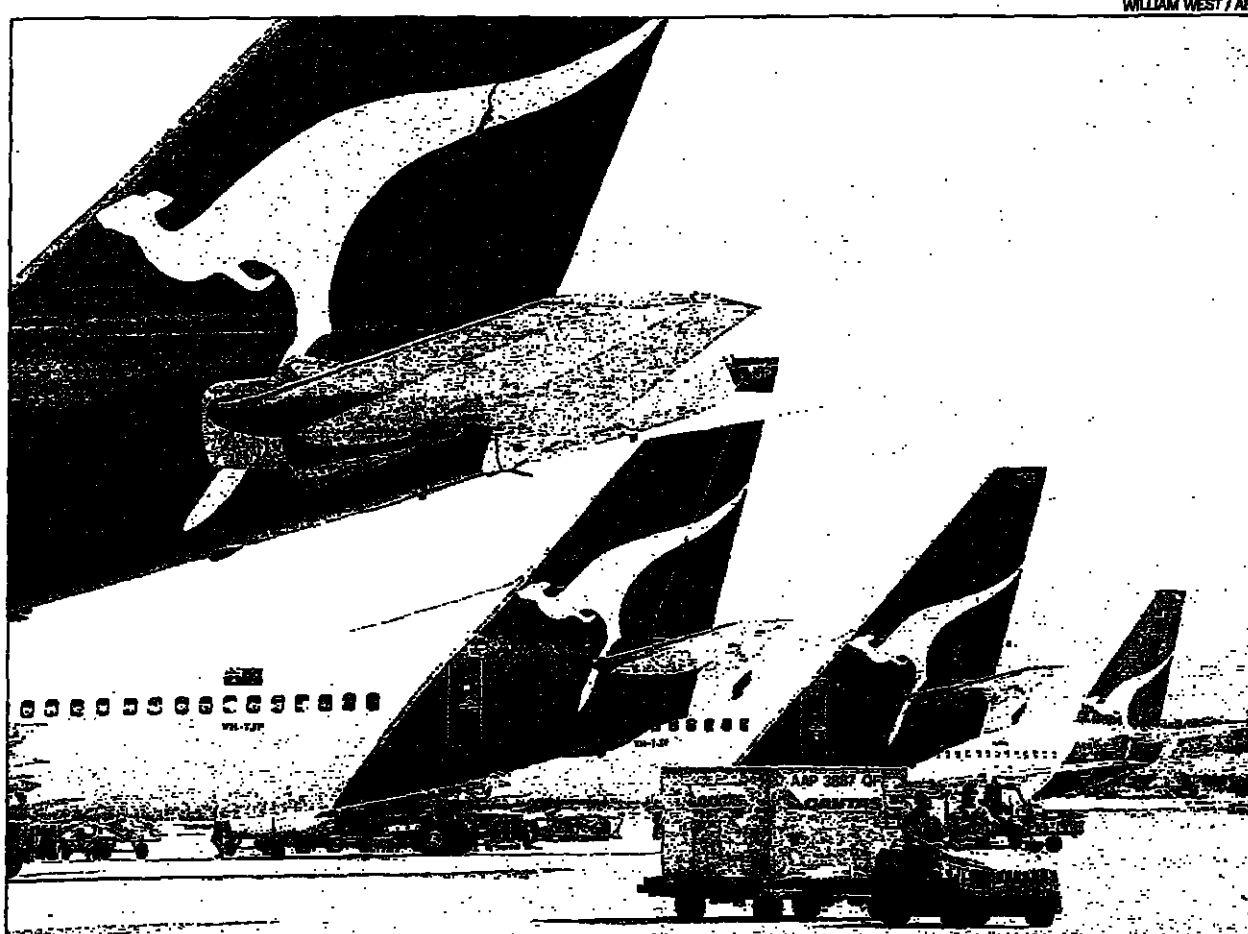
Sir Richard said he would not prevent goodwill problems from making acquisitions that were important to develop its business. The enormous goodwill generated by drug takeovers could produce very substantial charges against profits — an issue that has been believed to restrict Glaxo Wellcome's ability to mount hostile takeovers of Zeneca or other companies.

A final dividend of 21p increases the total by 3 per cent to 36p a share.

Shareholders in Zeneca yesterday gave a overwhelming backing to its £45 billion merger with Astra of Sweden. More than 539 million shares were voted in favour of the deal, with fewer than six million voting against. In a month's time Astra's shareholders will vote on the merger, which is opposed by a group representing small Swedish shareholders.

Investor, the Swedish investment group that owns more than 10 per cent of Astra, has given strong backing to the deal, which also needs to be approved by US and European competition authorities.

Tempus, page 30



Ready for take off: Qantas is confident that it will at least match last year's record profit of A\$304.8 million in this financial year

Qantas defies Asian turmoil

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

QANTAS AIRWAYS surprised investors yesterday when it reported a 34 per cent jump in interim net profit in the face of the Asian economic crisis.

The Australian airline, in which British Airways has a 25 per cent stake, said net earnings totalled A\$223 million

(£87 million) for the half year to December 31, reflecting its move to replace many Asian routes with flights to the US and the UK.

Analysts said that they would upgrade their full-year profit forecasts on the back of the result. The stock closed 21 cents higher at A\$3.92.

They had been concerned that Qantas would feel at least

some of the pain dealt to other airlines in the region by Asia's malaise.

Gary Pemberton, chairman, said: "In the face of difficult market conditions, we were able to absorb significant capital expenditure, maintain balance sheet gearing and increase profits."

He said Qantas was confident it would at least match

last year's record profit of A\$304.8 million this financial year.

Analysts did not rule out the prospect of Asia still damaging Qantas's earnings, but they are confident that the worst had passed. Qantas is a member of the oneworld alliance, whose other members include BA, American Airlines and Iberia.

US ruling lifts Skye share price

By PAUL DURMAN

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM is remaining tight-lipped about its plans for Paxil CR, a new form of its big-selling anti-depressant that is expected to take SkyePharma through to profitability.

SkyePharma helped develop Paxil CR and should earn a 3 per cent royalty on sales when the drug is launched in the US. Paxil, known as Serenaxin in the UK, had American sales last year of £700 million, making it SB's biggest-selling drug.

News yesterday that the US Food and Drug Administration has approved Paxil CR initially lifted SkyePharma's shares from 82p to 92p.

Salomon Smith Barney suggested SkyePharma will make an £8.4 million profit next year, and will earn £13 million a year from Paxil CR by 2002.

SkyePharma's shares later slipped back to 85p, as SB declined to clarify its launch plans for the anti-depressant. However, another possibility is that SB intends to use Paxil CR as part of its strategy to defend Paxil's patent protection, which expires in 2006. The patents on Paxil CR extend beyond this date.

Tempus, page 30

RJB threatens to close mines

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

RJB MINING has threatened to close mines with the loss of more than 800 jobs if the company is hit by strikes, according to the union poised to launch the first walkout.

Richard Budge, RJB's chief executive, said he would close three mines in Yorkshire if industrial action stops production, said Neil Greatrex, general secretary of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers. Talks between RJB and the generator are continuing but some in the industry are pessimistic that the coal producer will get sufficient orders.

RJB said that Mr Budge's comments had been distorted. "The conversation was about the likely outcome of a short-fall of about three million tonnes and it was said that that equated to the output of two to three pits."

Pit closures would be highly controversial so soon after last year's change of government policy to make the energy market fairer for coal. They would be seen as a blunt instrument used by RJB to cut costs.

The clash between RJB and the unions came as the UDM postponed a strike planned for next Monday. It is allowing RJB more time to meet pay demands.

LIMELIGHT, the fitted kitchens and bathrooms retailer, and Anglian Group, the double glazing and home products company which made a bid approach last month, have broken off talks after failing to agree a price.

Limelight said yesterday that "the third party" had not offered a price that fairly reflects the prospects of the company and, having been turned down, has withdrawn. Anglian is believed to have offered below £60 million for Limelight, which is capitalised at £39 million.

Limelight, which was found-

Limelight bid talks break off

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

by the late Stephen Boier, has had a checkered past.

It was floated at 175p a share two-and-a-half years ago and at one stage touched 200p. But the company ran into trading and financial problems which saw the shares crash in early 1997, falling to a low of 25p. They closed yesterday at 39p, down 49p after a recent rally tied in with the bid approach.

Following a series of changes in management, it is expected to show a pre-tax profit of about £8 million for 1998, having made a £12.3 million loss a year earlier.

Narrow victory for Tay board

By ROBERT LEA

CONFUSION surrounded the attempted boardroom coup at Tay Homes last night after the official result of an extraordinary meeting of shareholders declared that the plans of dissenting investors had been defeated by the narrowest margins.

Shortly after the declaration, which showed a victory for the incumbent directors by 50.8 per cent to 49.2 per cent,

the rebel shareholders' camp questioned the figures released to the Stock Exchange.

Richard Tice, who forced the meeting in an attempt to sack Tay's executive directors and replace them with a management team led by himself, said that by his calculations his camp should have received 400,000 more votes. Mr Tice's motion was defeated by 12 million votes to 11.6 million.

If the result stands as communicated to the Stock Exchange — and a spokesman for Tay last night said there was "absolutely no question" that the numbers, which were verified by PricewaterhouseCoopers, are correct — then it is believed Mr Tice will launch a takeover bid.

Tice, the joint chief executive of rival housebuilder Sunley, which has an 11 per cent stake in Tay, had received backing from Phillips & Drew, the com-

pany's largest single investor. The fund manager holds 17 per cent of Tay.

Mr Tice said: "We are monitoring the situation very closely." Privately he was encouraged by the fact that when the votes of the board are stripped out, his motion received the support of 70 per cent of Tay investors.

Of the official result, John Swanson, Tay's chief executive, said: "A win's a win."

also denied the reports of a freeze. The reassurances helped BAE shares to rally, closing at 412p.

Last autumn, BAE shares were hit by anxieties about an outstanding cash payment from Saudi Arabia. Under the Al Yamamah deal, BAE is mainly paid in oil, with balancing cash payments if necessary to compensate for fluctuations in the oil price, which has been struggling at historic lows in recent months. It is understood that several hundred million pounds were duly paid to BAE in December.

The Ministry of Defence

also denied the reports of a freeze. The reassurances helped BAE shares to rally, closing at 412p.

By ADAM JONES

SAUDI ARABIA was recently forced to postpone a planned £1.1 billion purchase of South African artillery equipment by two years.

Joe Modise, the South African Defence Minister, said the delay was a result of Saudi financial problems.

The Al Yamamah deal, which was originally negotiated by the Thatcher Government in the 1980s, has seen BAE sell Tornado fighters and Hawk jets to the Saudis, with additional maintenance, training and spare parts contracts.

only supplied by BAE's own facilities, training and spare parts contracts.

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Nomura share sales trigger investigation

SECURITIES industry inspectors are mounting an investigation at Nomura, Japan's biggest securities house. The inspection by the country's Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission comes after a big sell-off of shares in Tokyo after fears of the extent of the losses in its US businesses. Nomura is also, reportedly, the subject of a second inspection by Japan's Financial Supervisory Agency. Although this is routine, the agency is said to be evaluating Nomura's assets after the overseas losses.

The financial health of Nomura, which made losses in the first half of the current financial year of more than £1 billion, has been the subject of speculation after its losses in the US stemming from its real-estate finance and mortgage-backed bonds business. Its overseas units were also hit hard on Russian bond losses. Capital Company of America, a wholly owned subsidiary in the US, said in October that it expected to post an after-tax loss of \$275 million (£170 million) in the half year to September 30. Nomura, which is best known in the UK for its deal-doing principal finance team headed by Guy Hands, declined to comment on the investigations.

Cookson sells division

COOKSON, the materials conglomerate, has sold its fibres business to a venture capital group for £93 million. The disposal forms part of Cookson's drive to reduce the number of businesses it operates in order to focus on electronics, ceramics and engineering. Cookson Fibres makes solution-dyed fibres for the automotive and upholstery industries and fine denier fibres for textiles and clothing. Last year Cookson Fibres made profits of £10.3 million and had net assets at the year end of £89 million. Cookson will take a £3 million write-off.

Waddington warning

WADDINGTON became the latest packaging group to warn investors on profits, sending its shares down 12 1/2p to 186 1/2p. It said profits would be 10 per cent below City expectations and gave warning that tough trading conditions would continue "well into the next financial year". It estimates that profits for the year to April 3 will be about £31 million compared with market forecasts of £35 million. Last year the company reported profits of £39.6 million. Earlier this week Low & Bonar, a rival packaging company, issued a similar warning.

Debonair in black

DEBONAIR, the Easdaq-quoted airline based in Luton, hailed a turning point for the company yesterday as it reported third-quarter profits. With load factors up to 62 per cent from 45 per cent the previous year, the cut-price operator made operating profits in the three months to December 31 of £500,000 compared with quarterly losses of £1.2 million in 1997. Turnover was up by £1 million to £8.6 million in the quarter. Losses for the year so far are running 17 per cent lower at £4.3 million.

Ibstock quits Portugal

IBSTOCK, the building products group that is in the process of being taken over by CRH, the Irish company, in a £326 million deal, is liquidating its interests in Portugal. The company said that after previous non-core disposals in the country it was now also disposing of its holding in Cairna Ceramica e Servicos, giving Ibstock £21.6 million in cash after costs. Philip Mengel, the chief executive, said that the company was now concentrated on the British and American markets.

CPL scents profit fall

SHARES of CPL Aromas fell 19p to 64p yesterday after the producer and distributor of flavours, fragrances and aroma ingredients gave warning that profits would fall significantly below current market expectations in the year to March 31. The company blamed depressed retail demand in the UK and the adverse impact of unfavourable exchange rates on CPL's export business. Trading in Eastern Europe and the Far East was also weak. In the past financial year the company earned pre-tax profits of £1.9 million on sales of £35 million.

Honda in US boost

HONDA, Japan's third-largest carmaker, said net income rose nearly 16 per cent to a record ¥75.6 billion (£390 million) in the third quarter as strong US sales and a weak yen more than offset falling domestic and Asian sales. Third-quarter sales in North America, which generates most of Honda's profits, rose 7.7 per cent. But Honda gave warning that the yen's sudden sharp appreciation against the dollar late last year was likely to weigh on revenues for the full year to March 31, reducing sales by more than ¥100 billion.

Wolseley in five deals

WOLSELEY, the building products company, has acquired five distribution businesses in America, Britain and the Republic of Ireland for £38 million. These businesses are expected to contribute £92 million to turnover in a full year. In the current financial year Wolseley has acquired businesses valued at a total of £216 million and which will contribute sales of £439 million annually. The largest acquisition announced yesterday was Heatmerchants, a plumbing products distributor based in Athlone in the Irish Republic, with sales of £28.4 million.

Carrefour advances

CARREFOUR, the French supermarket group, said it was on target to lift operating profits by 20 per cent this year even if currency devaluations in Brazil and Argentina continued to have an adverse impact on its Latin American operations. Yesterday Carrefour reported a 7.9 per cent rise in 1998 net profits to 6616 million (£420 million) before exceptional charges. Sales rose 6.2 per cent to £27.4 billion. Carrefour booked an exceptional profit of £31 million from the sale of the company's Depot US, Depot France and Carpetand outlets.

Lafontaine fails to change ECB's stance on rates

By SAIED SHAH AND SIGRID AUFTERBECK

THE European Central Bank left its key interest rate unchanged at 3 per cent yesterday despite intense political pressure from Germany and France to cut rates.

Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister and outspoken advocate of lower rates, attended the meeting to press his case but failed to persuade the central bankers at the biweekly meeting of the ECB governing council.

Herr Lafontaine has repeatedly said that European jobs and growth are under threat from deflation, but Wim Du-

isenberg, the President of ECB, has maintained that prices, jobs and growth are steady. Explaining its decision, the ECB said: "The governing council confirmed its earlier assessment that the prospects for price stability remain favourable and that no strong pressures can be identified."

Economists said that a potentially inflationary wage settlement in Germany would have weighed against lower rates.

Employers and IG Metall, the metalworkers union, agreed a 3.6 per cent wage increase for workers in the state

of Baden-Württemberg before the ECB voted on interest rates. The rest of IG Metall's 3.4 million membership are expected to receive the same deal. The union had originally demanded 6.5 per cent, while employers had offered 2.3 per cent.

The agreement is regarded as a benchmark for wage negotiations across Germany. Analysts fear that 3.6 per cent is too high for Germany's sluggish economy, which is forecast to grow at some 2 per cent this year, down from 2.8 per cent last year.



Duisenberg: steady growth

BAe denies reports of freeze on Saudi arms deal

By ADAM JONES

BRITISH AEROSPACE vehemently denied reports yesterday that the ongoing Al Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia has been frozen.

The reports had caused BAE shares to slump from the opening price of 430p to 385p, forcing BAE, which is the prime contractor on the project, to issue a statement.

It said: "The company confirms that no such moves to freeze the programme have taken place and that the Al Yamamah programme continues as planned."

The Ministry of Defence

also denied the reports of a freeze. The reassurances helped BAE shares to rally, closing at 412p.

Last autumn, BAE shares were hit by anxieties about an outstanding cash payment from Saudi Arabia. Under the Al Yamamah deal, BAE is mainly paid in oil, with balancing cash payments if necessary to compensate for fluctuations in the oil price, which has been struggling at historic lows in recent months. It is understood that several hundred million pounds were duly paid to BAE in December.

only supplied by BAE's own facilities, training and spare parts contracts.

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Exchange rates

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.67	2.49
Austria Sch	21.01	19.35
Belgium Fr	61.86	56.00
Canada \$	2.557	2.39
Cyprus Cyp £	0.3670	0.3155
Denmark Kr	11.40	10.54
Egypt	5.78	5.17
Finland Mk	6.20	5.84
France Fr	10.01	9.23
Germany DM	3.007	2.765
Greece Dr	166.36	153.48
Hong Kong \$	13.49	12.29
Iceland	126	108
Indonesia	1600	1300
Ireland P	1.1965	1.1106
Israel Sh	1.00	0.94
Italy Lira	2091	1954
Japan Yen	210.67	183.14
Malaysia RM	0.067	0.063
Netherlands Gld	3.368	3.101
Norway Kr	13.30	12.36
Portugal Esc	304.11	282.08
South Africa R	10.74	9.78
Spain Ptas	253.46	234.67
Sweden Kr	13.71	12.64
Switzerland Fr	2.476	2.268
Turkey Lira	81.837	64.314
USA \$	1.740	1.597

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Brown cashes in on pensions



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Scandal begets scandal. It seems that when Gordon Brown stands up next month and dispenses a little largesse, he will be handing out the guilt money squeezed out of those who mis-sold personal pensions. Not only is the Chancellor guilty of giving us a somewhat enhanced view of the strength of the economy, as he broadcasts a surplus that has been secretly swollen with one-off compensation payments of which, apparently, the Treasury has not kept count. He is also missing an opportunity to begin to tackle the terrifying problem of how public sector pensions will eventually be paid.

The unfunded nature of most of the public sector schemes has long been a source of fear to those who dare to think long term about such matters. With retired nurses and teachers likely to be drawing their pensions for many more years than did Mr Chippie, the burden on the public finances could be unbearable. This is the sort of issue no Government races to tackle: better to keep on running up the bills for the next administration to pay.

But if Mr Brown had been really brave, he could have taken the money that is now being handed over by the private sector pensions industry and used it as seed corn on which to start growing a more sensible solution to the problem of public sector pensions. In the United States, Bill

Clinton is husbanding some of the surplus he has found in the social security budget and segregating it as the start for a new fund. It would be one example of White House behaviour which might have transferred well to Downing Street. Yet this is wishful thinking. The Government's radical ideas on pensions appear to have vanished to the back benches with Frank Field and now the whole debate seems to have been mired in the turf wars between the Treasury and the Department of Social Security.

While the tussle goes on, the private sector seems content to sit meekly back and await instructions. The companies have been so battered by the opprobrium heaped upon them for mis-selling that they do not have the nerve to step forward now and offer constructive advice. They are appalled at the way the compensation they are paying to reinstate public sector pensioners is being used to swell the public purse and privately mutter about the iniquity of a windfall tax by any other name. Yet they would not dream of voicing their concerns publicly for fear of the terrible repercussions that might re-

sult. A handbagging by Helen Liddell left its mark, as did the plentiful threats that those finance houses that misbehaved might find themselves blacklisted from selling new products dreamed up by the Government. So there is silence on the subject. But when Mr Brown generously hands some extra cash to the health service, spare a thought for how we are going to fund all those nurses' pensions.

Who mocks the meat it feeds on?

Guy Hands is away from his office at the moment. He can still afford a decent holiday, despite the refusal of the institutions to pay what he deemed a reasonable price for William Hill. Even now, Nomura stands to have turned a profit of about £80 million on the deal in just 15 months. The Hands pay

packet may not reach its record £40 million again but it will still make most City salaries look like small change. Could it be that the merest hint of jealousy influenced a few fund managers in their determination to banter down the William Hill price?

The green-eyed monster would be a less worrying explanation than the one emanating from the Hill camp yesterday. That put the blame firmly on the institutions' lack of enthusiasm for anything other than the largest companies, preferably in telecoms, pharmaceuticals or financial services. Some of these stocks have already been driven to levels unsustainable on logical grounds but the wondrous thing about the investors' commitment to the big cap stocks is that it becomes self-justifying. They keep buying the stocks and the prices keep rising.

At some stage the market must break out of this pattern, but in

the meantime smaller companies are not merely consigned to the second league but a different game completely.

With a market capitalisation of just under £500 million, William Hill was apparently dismissed as the sort of tiddler that major investors would only consider buying at bargain prices. They will happily pay 70 times earnings for Vodafone but a chain of betting shops has been beaten down to a p/e of just 9.4. It may not be the most glamorous business, and its growth potential may be limited but inveterate punters assure Hill of a steady stream of profits.

The extraordinary polarisation of the market now being created by unimaginative investors is fuelling the desire of many companies to go private. Hundreds of businesses are currently examining the prospects for bailing out of the stock market and all the expensive hassle that a quotation

brings with it. Venture capitalists will help them. The clever ones will then put together several companies in the same sector and create a business of sufficient scale to appeal to institutional investors. Then they will float it — and turn the sort of profit to make the herd of fund managers truly jealous.

UK's finest need to insure a future

Britain's once mighty, world-leading insurance industry is looking ever more puny, viewed from outside. Global insurers are being created and our finest left behind.

Aegon of The Netherlands, hardly a household name even though it owns Scottish Equitable, has just agreed to gobble up Transamerica, which shares its founder with Bank of America and surely seemed proof even against another earthquake to most residents of San Francisco.

The deal turns Aegon into the world's third-biggest quoted insurer, after America's AIG and Germany's Allianz. It also becomes second only to American Prudential in the US life market.

Not that this is an equal deal. Transamerica is valued at £6 billion, mostly in Aegon shares, the size of a middling UK group. Aegon was already valued at £34 billion. Among insurers with a UK element, only Swiss-led Allied Zurich operates in this league.

Our own mighty Pru, the equivalent quoted life assurance leader, comes in at just half Aegon's value pre-Transamerica. Legal & General and CGU rate £12 billion. Any of them would make a fine meal for Aegon or its rivals in a couple of years time.

To make life trickier, continental insurers are protected against takeover. Aegon, in the usual Dutch way, has a linked foundation, which will restore its holding to a controlling 40 per cent. It makes British rivals look puny.

Kiss and make up

WITH Valentine's Day now just a misty memory the would-be investment trust lovers — 3i and Electra — have fallen out. Like two spotty teenagers brimful of the terrors of first-time infatuation, neither is prepared to talk to the other unless the other makes the first move. Look carefully in the corner of the sixth form common room and you will see each in wounded, self-righteous debate with friends. Yet they studiously avoid direct contact. For shareholders' sakes, the adolescent intriguing should stop.

Aegon joins superleague with \$9.7bn US purchase

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

AEGON took a leap into the superleague of world insurers yesterday by announcing that it was paying \$9.7 billion (£5.95 billion) for Transamerica, the financial services company based in San Francisco (see Commentary, this page).

The move will propel Aegon to the number three slot in life insurance in the world by market value and make it the third largest US life insurer by assets and premiums written.

After the acquisition, which is expected to be completed by the summer, Aegon will generate two thirds of its profit in the US, up from 51 per cent. In terms of market capitalisation the combined company will be dwarfed only by AIG of the US and Allianz of Germany.

Aegon, based in The Hague and owner of Scottish Equitable in the UK, derives about 86 per cent of its business from life insurance and already has sub-

stantial business interests in the UK, Hungary and Spain. Although the deal marks the Dutch insurer's largest purchase to date, Aegon said it was still looking for acquisitions.

Kees Storm, chairman of Aegon, said only the high prices of European insurance companies were preventing the company from further expansion.

Aegon's offer is 70 per cent shares and 30 per cent cash and represents a 34.5 per cent premium to Transamerica's closing price yesterday. The latter has \$38.5 billion in assets.

Aegon will assume \$1.1 billion in Transamerica debt. The Dutch insurer said the deal would lift its earnings per share growth in 1999, helping to achieve growth of about 12 to 15 per cent.

The purchase follows Aegon's purchase of Provident, the US group valued at \$3.5 billion, just over two years ago.

Avesta woe hits British Steel price

By CARL MORTISHED

BRITISH STEEL yesterday suffered a blow as Avesta Sheffield, its Stockholm-listed subsidiary disclosed further evidence of weakness in the stainless steel market.

Shares in British Steel fell 3 per cent, to 119 1/2p, as Avesta reported a third-quarter loss of SwK521 million (£40 million), giving a nine-month loss of SwK1 billion, and spoke of price pressures caused by surplus capacity in Europe after a fall in exports to Asia.

Avesta said that stainless steel prices continued to fall for most of the third quarter, with cold-rolled coil down 13 per cent compared with 1997's third-quarter prices. Avesta has also been hit by US anti-dumping duties, adding a 13.5 per cent tariff to imports from the UK from December.

However, Avesta said base prices stabilised at the turn of the year, with US price rises expected to take effect in March and Asian prices strengthening after gains in Japanese and Korean currencies.

Pace order in US lifts share price

By SAEED SHAH

THE first US order for Pace Micro Technology's digital set-top boxes, announced yesterday, boosted the shares.

The price jumped 21 1/2p to 140 1/2p, to a two-year high, as a result of the deal, with BellSouth in Atlanta. Pace will supply the telecoms company with 100,000 multipoint microwave distribution (MMD) boxes, for an undisclosed sum.

Pace had a troubled launch on to the market in 1996 as digital television failed to take off as quickly as expected. The shares launch price was 172p, but they sunk as low as 25 1/2p.

Pace last month reported dramatically improved results, as digital TV started to become established in the UK and elsewhere in the world.

Pre-tax profit was £8.3 million for the six months to November 28, compared with a loss of £12.3 million in the previous year. MMDS works like satellite TV, but is broadcast from ground-based transmitter masts.

Tempus, page 30

Visser saves Brown & Jackson £1m

THE decision by Johan Visser, chief executive of Brown & Jackson, to put a stop to the discount retailer's plans to shut a fifth of its Poundstretcher stores saved £1.1 million, the company's interim results yesterday revealed (Fraser Nelson writes).

Mr Visser, who was parachuted in when Pepkor of South Africa took control of the company two years ago, yesterday explained: "When I arrived, 63 Poundstretcher stores were earmarked for closure. Some of the disposals

had already gone through, but I was able to save 34."

The mixture of saving on the closure costs plus the return to the sales growth across the 259-strong Poundstretcher chain, saw the company writing back £1.1 million from a previous provision.

In the six months to December 31 pre-tax profits at the group which includes 151 Your More Stores and 91 What Everyone Wants outlets came in at £22 million (£13.2 million). Brown & Jackson shares added 7 1/2p to a five-year high of 104 1/2p.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Contract fears send Bae into nosedive

CLAIMS that the most lucrative contract for British Aerospace had been snatched by the French, sending the shares into a nosedive, touching 385p before ending 18p down at 412p, making it the worst performing stock among the top 100.

Diplomatic sources were credited with a report that the lucrative Al Yamamah oil-for-arms contract with Saudi Arabia had been shelved because of the country's economic problems.

The story was met by firm denials from both the Ministry of Defence and Bae. But by then the damage had already been done to British Aerospace with GEC also down 11p to 515p.

Al Yamamah is reckoned to be worth £2 billion a year in revenue. But the collapse in the crude price means Saudi Arabia will be forced to top up the oil payments with hard cash. It was estimated at the time of Bae's interim results that a £500 million shortfall had already occurred.

Last night dealers had begun pointing the finger of suspicion for the story at market bears anxious to call the Bae share price lower ahead of next week's final results.

Share prices generally endured another roller-coaster performance with an early mark-up generated by another healthy set of trading results from blue chip companies.

At one stage, the FTSE 100 index had replaced a rise of 44.9 with a deficit of 71.3. But an opening rally on Wall Street enabled the index to reverse the fall to just 3.5 at 6,074.9 by the close.

Total turnover reached 998 million shares. The London Stock Exchange enjoyed its best trading month to date in January, with £366 billion of stock changing hands. Turnover in euro-denominated transactions, accounted for 42 per cent of the total value of business undertaken by the LSE.

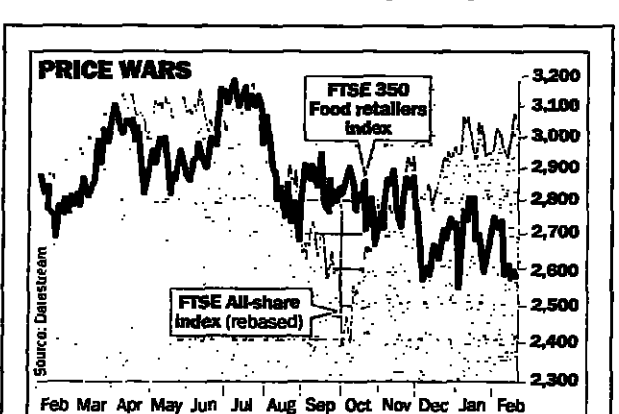
The City gave the thumbs-up to final results from Glaxo Wellcome, up 21p to £20.14, despite the drugs group reporting a downturn in profits. It follows the expiry of patents for its two best-selling drugs, Zovirax and Zantac. But the company, whose chairman is Sir Richard Sykes and chief executive Robert Ingram, was upbeat about the future and said there was scope for further growth in some areas.

The speculative buying that has been behind the recent surge in demand for Legal & General shows signs of running out of steam with the price unmoored at 863p. HSBC Securities, the broker, cut its rating from "buy" to "add". Dealers say the life insurance sector has been galvanised by talk of a merger between Barclays Bank, 18p better at £16.86, and the Prudential.



Sir Richard Sykes, flanked by Robert Ingram, left, and John Coombe, finance director, saw Glaxo Wellcome rise

has been behind the recent surge in demand for Legal & General shows signs of running out of steam with the price unmoored at 863p. HSBC Securities, the broker, cut its rating from "buy" to "add". Dealers say the life insurance sector has been galvanised by talk of a merger between Barclays Bank, 18p better at £16.86, and the Prudential.



FEARS are increasing that the supermarket price wars are heating up again. The latest AGB survey shows some of the bigger players losing market share such as Sainsbury, unchanged at 28.1p. Tesco, 3.1p lighter at 174p. J. Sainsbury, 7.4p off at 377p, and Sainsbury's 1p easier at 369p.

They are reckoned to have lost ground to the likes of Asda, 1p lower at 153p, and William Morrison Supermarkets, 2.1p firmer at 326p.

But brokers have their doubts. They say there is little evidence of the price war escalating. "The situation has not materially altered," said one broker.

Paul Smiddy, food retail analyst at Credit Lyonnais, the broker, is also sceptical about the latest survey and places more importance in the findings of the Office of Fair Trading inquiry into the industry due out within the next month.

"The sector looks bombed out and reasonable value at these levels," he says.

25p at 734p on the back of some useful trading news from Carrefour, the French retailer, and a "buy" recommendation from Warburg Dillon Read, the broker.

Sir Alastair Grant, chairman of Scottish & Newcastle, bought 20,000 shares at 685p, taking his holding to 50,000 shares. The S&N share price has dropped from a peak of 945p last year to close last night 7p up at 683p.

Shield Diagnostics responded positively to this week's bullish comments from Nomura, the Japanese securities house, with a rise of 50p to 525p. Nomura puts a price of £21 a share on Shield if it can find a merger partner.

Hawthorn firm 21p to 244p as Richard Morgan, a non-executive director, bought 100,000 shares at 234p. Share buying by one director was also recorded in Aldi-listed Future Integrated Technology, 1p firmer at 354p.

David Elliott, a non-executive director, has bought 75,000 shares at 35p, stretching his holding to 85,000, or less than 1 per cent of the company.

McKee's dipped 4p to 348p after Merrill Lynch, the broker, reduced its recommendation for the shares from "accumulate" to "neutral".

A downbeat trading statement left Affen nursing a fall of 3p at 292p. The cry of "fore!" reverberated around the Square Mile as shares of Gold Club Holdings stood out with a jump of 5p, or almost 25 per cent, to 254p. The company says it knows of no reason for the rise.

St Modwen advanced 4p to 734p helped by a "buy" recommendation from Warburg Dillon Read, the broker.

GILT-EDGED: Opening losses among US treasury bonds left London closing below its best levels of the day after an early mark-up.

Short and longer-dated issues fared well, but medium issues came under selling pressure.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt ended 7p down at £16.98 as a total of 29,000 contracts were completed. Among conventional issues Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 33p to £148.85, while in shorts Treasury 7 per cent 2002 finished 5p firmer at £106.99.

NEW YORK: Shares were generally higher in morning trading. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 47.98 at 9,243.45.

Crosby still a hash & young

JAMES CROSBY, Halifax's chief executive for six weeks, has a lot to prove. It is early days yet, but the youthful leader of this titan of UK financial services has shown little sign of being able to answer the enormous "what next?" question which has been hanging over the Halifax since it was floated in June 1997.

It may be that, with the kind of cash being generated Mr Crosby does not need to do anything to satisfy shareholders except keep the dividends flowing. Plans were laid yesterday to shell out another £1.5 billion to Halifax's 3.6 million shareholders. Once distributed the total dividends paid, in less than two years, will be 107p a share — £375 for the average shareholder with 350 shares. Notwithstanding that, the shares cost most private shareholders now, that is a return of 13.5 per cent in less than two years — using the current share

price for the capital element in this calculation. That is enough to embarrass the interest on a standard Halifax savings account.

But while handing cash back to shareholders gives great income, it underlines the imagination deficit at the top of the organisation. Halifax cannot afford such generous dividends if it does not take the business forward. In some areas it has gone backwards. It improved on its dismal first-half new mortgage business performance in the second half, but it is still lending less than its share of the existing mortgage market. The Lex Service deal to lend on cars is progress too, but in no way represents the "Big Idea".

Nevertheless, hold on to the shares. The dividend income is juicy. Moreover, if the strategy vacuum persists, the chance of a share price enhancing takeover bid increases.

Glaxo Wellcome

HOWEVER you look at them, Glaxo Wellcome's results are simply stunning. It lost £600 million of Zantac sales; it suffered price cuts in Japan; and it endured economic turmoil in many emerging markets. But despite all of this it still increased underlying sales by 4 per cent, raised pre-tax profits by 5 per cent and lifted earnings by 6 per cent.

Holding back research and development spending has clearly helped. But what is impressive is the depth of its fast-growing medicine cabinet. Glaxo Wellcome has exchanged its former dependence on Zantac, its ulcer blockbuster, for a galaxy of stars. Sales of Fixotide for asthma are up 63 per cent to £498 million. Wellbutrin for depression has more than doubled to £307 million, and there is strong growth in Combivir

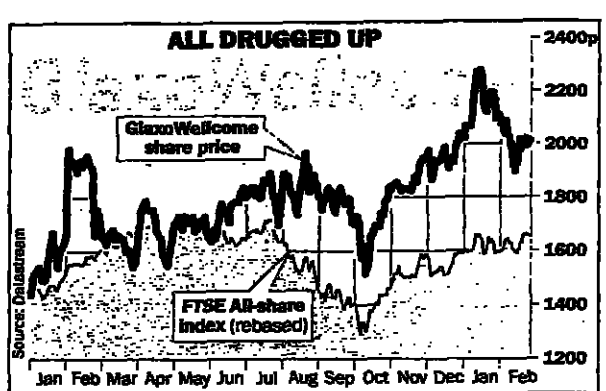
for HIV and Zylab, which

helps people to stop smoking. Excluding Zantac and Zovirax, the group's sales grew 17 per cent, and by a startling 23 per cent in the huge American market.

Better still, this growth is backed up by a strong programme of launches with new drugs for asthma, HIV,

hepatitis B, flu, irritable bowel

syndrome and others. Little wonder, then, the company is so loved. For such a big firm, its near-term growth prospects are remarkable. The concern remains that so much of this is already in the price. At £20.14, the shares trade on 36 times forecasts of this year's earnings, a multiple that only falls to 31 in 2000. That is too high to buy.



Rank

RELIEF that Rank's numbers were no worse than expected fed the 11 per cent rise in the company's share price yesterday. But the figures were still very poor.

The road back should be smoothed by the amounts of capital expended improving the company's trading business. More than £2 billion has already been spent and another £700 million is slated. But investors cannot expect that Rank problems will be solved simply because it has thrown money at them.

If Rank is to flourish it needs to exploit the video reproduction businesses, and avoid mistakes.

If brands such as Mecca Bingo and Butlins are to succeed, Rank also needs to replicate the pop music industry's ability to recycle and re-invent fashion. If the shares are to sustain and progress on yesterday's gains, the company also needs decent economic

conditions to feed consumer

confidence. It is too early to recommend that Rank shares be bought. Its history is too turbulent for that.

Investors require hard evidence of profit success before throwing good money after what has been a bad investment for so long.

But holders can begin to hope that the worst is behind Rank, and give the company one last chance to perform.

Pace Micro INVESTORS who lost faith in Pace Micro Technology after its disastrous flotation three years ago may now be beginning to regret a decision to sell out.

Pace Micro, which makes set-top television signal decoders, is under new management. Led by Malcolm Miller, it swung back into profit during the first half of this financial year, and has now confidently moved into the North American market. Quietly,

the shares are creeping back

to float price levels. Pace was floated in 1997 because the launch of digital television, for which the decoders are required, was delayed. Now with digital television taking off investors are beginning to realise the potential again.

Yesterday's deal with Bell South increases Pace's attractions. The US market will eventually account for about a third of the global digital television market.

Investors must remember that Pace is a relatively small company competing with giants such as Sony and Philips. The market for digital television is also still in its infancy, and anything could happen before old-fashioned analogue frequencies are switched off. At 141p, Pace's shares trade on a racy, but not excessive, forward p/e ratio of 32.

Nonetheless, accumulate. EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFTS			
Mar	300-310	Mar	300-310
Apr	300-310	Apr	300-310
May	300-310	May	300-310
Jun	300-310	Jun	300-310
Jul	300-310	Jul	300-310
Aug	300-310	Aug	300-310
Sep	300-310	Sep	300-310
Oct	300-310	Oct	300-310
Nov	300-310	Nov	300-310
Dec	300-310	Dec	300-310
Jan	300-310	Jan	300-310
Feb	300-310	Feb	300-310

ICE OILS (Barrel FOB)			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

PRODUCTS (MT)			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

WHITE SUGAR (C&F)			
Mar	214.63	Mar	214.63
Apr	214.63	Apr	214.63
May	214.63	May	214.63
Jun	214.63	Jun	214.63
Jul	214.63	Jul	214.63
Aug	214.63	Aug	214.63
Sep	214.63	Sep	214.63
Oct	214.63	Oct	214.63
Nov	214.63	Nov	214.63
Dec	214.63	Dec	214.63
Jan	214.63	Jan	214.63
Feb	214.63	Feb	214.63

MEAT & LIVESTOCK			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

COMMODITY PRICES			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

LIFE FUTURES			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

LIFE OPTIONS			
Mar	10.20	Mar	10.20
Apr	10.20	Apr	10.20
May	10.20	May	10.20
Jun	10.20	Jun	10.20
Jul	10.20	Jul	10.20
Aug	10.20	Aug	10.20
Sep	10.20	Sep	10.20
Oct	10.20	Oct	10.20
Nov	10.20	Nov	10.20
Dec	10.20	Dec	10.20
Jan	10.20	Jan	10.20
Feb	10.20	Feb	10.20

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Long Gilt			
Mar	117.27	Mar	117.27
Apr	117.27	Apr	117.27
May	117.27	May	117.27
Jun	117.27	Jun	117.27
Jul	117.27	Jul	117.27
Aug	117.27	Aug	117.27
Sep	117.27	Sep	117.27
Oct	117.27	Oct	117.27
Nov	117.27	Nov	117.27
Dec	117.27	Dec	117.27
Jan	117.27	Jan	117.27
Feb	117.27	Feb	117.27

5-Year Gilt			
Mar	118.17	Mar	118.17
Apr	118.17	Apr	118.17
May	118.17	May	118.17
Jun	118.17	Jun	118.17
Jul	118.17	Jul	118.17
Aug	118.17	Aug	118.17
Sep	118.17	Sep	118.17
Oct	118.17	Oct	118.17
Nov	118.17	Nov	118.17
Dec	118.17	Dec	118.17
Jan	118.17	Jan	118.17
Feb	118.17	Feb	118.17

Italian Govt Bond			
Mar	113.58	Mar	113.58
Apr	113.58	Apr	113.58
May	113.58	May	113.58
Jun	113.58	Jun	113.58
Jul	113.58	Jul	113.58
Aug	113.58	Aug	113.58
Sep	113.58	Sep	113.58
Oct	113.58	Oct	113.58
Nov	113.58	Nov	113.58
Dec	113.58	Dec	113.58
Jan	113.58	Jan	113.58
Feb	113.58	Feb	113.58

Japanese Govt Bond			
Mar	120.91	Mar	120.91
Apr	120.91	Apr	120.91
May	120.91	May	120.91
Jun	120.91	Jun	120.91
Jul	120.91	Jul	120.91
Aug	120.91	Aug	120.91
Sep	120.91	Sep	120.91
Oct	120.91	Oct	120.91
Nov	120.91	Nov	120.91
Dec	120.91	Dec	120.91
Jan	120.91	Jan	120.91
Feb	120.91	Feb	120.91

3-Mth Euro Swiss					
Mar 99	98.700	98.720	98.680	98.680	6810
Jun 99	98.600	98.620	98.580	98.580	10427
3-Mth Euro Liber					
Mar 99	96.890	96.990	96.975	96.980	1384
Jun 99	97.080	97.095	97.060	97.065	2344
Sep 99	97.120	97.125	97.115	97.115	275

Would you be willing to buy shares in the National Health Service?

Every Secretary of State and every Government for 50 years has been faced with the question: "What should be done with the NHS?" The first difficulty in addressing the question is finding the starting point: the condition of the service today.

Of the following two scenarios, which one rings most true?

Scenario 1: Growing crisis. The NHS is in crisis again. A depressing daily news diet of bed shortages, patients on trolleys, unsafe levels of intensive care beds, shortage of nurses, overworked junior doctors, relations being asked to undertake basic nursing duties, crises of morale, criminal assaults on staff, almost 2 per cent of the population on a waiting list, GPs squabbling with the Secretary of State, accusations of hidden rationing and so on. A service near to breakdown.

Scenario 2: Success story. Despite the occasional short-term operational difficulties that are inevitable in an organisation of such a size, the success of the NHS continues. The best elements of recent structural reforms have been consolidated and the worst elements jettisoned and replaced. More patients are being treated than ever before. The service is to receive a further significant increase in funding. Sensible levels of management are now in place in a service that has historically been under-managed. Technology and drug therapies are advancing rapidly. Many are now treated on a day-case basis. Waiting lists, inevitable because of finite resources, are now back under control. The NHS is the envy of the world.

Both of these views are largely true. Indeed, taken together, they probably reflect how the public sees the NHS — a modern day marvel, but rather threadbare around the edges.

The NHS is full of such paradoxes. This would not touch matter, except that understanding and agreeing about the current state of the service is an essential starting point.



Close examination of strategic, operational and managerial issues may identify ways of improving the service, but the solutions may be uncomfortable

In the last of our five-part series, DAVID WILLIAMS casts an investor's eye over the 'business'



ing more and more health-care resources.

Continual advances in technology and drugs mean that more can be done for more people, but (usually) at a greater cost. A good example of this is Viagra.

There are increased public expectations about what can be expected from healthcare systems and the quality of life to which people are entitled.

There are very many experts better qualified than I to offer views about how the NHS can meet these challenges. There are advocates for the better use of technology, the creation of better partnerships, improved collabora-

tion between various parts of the system, more effective use of human resources and so on. Others argue that these challenges cannot be met solely by tactical improvements and require a significant in-

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE NHS

jection of resources. To the outsider (and probably to most insiders), the strength of these arguments is virtually impossible to assess. The NHS is just so big, complex and diverse. Not only is it dif-

ficult to agree where we are now, but judging the effectiveness of proposed solutions is a forbidding task.

One way of breaking free of such impenetrable issues is to consider a different question. Ignore "What should be done about the NHS" and start, instead, with "Would you buy shares in it?"

Assuming we are rational investors, what questions would we ask before investing in the enterprise? Let us agree that, because we are looking at public provision and because we do not have the space here, we will leave to one side the obvious starting point of whether the business is making money. Instead, we will move straight to some of the strategic, opera-

tional and managerial issues that we might generally consider. Is this an organisation that:

- ☐ Is reasonably free from political interference?
- ☐ Attracts only a reasonable amount of media attention?
- ☐ Has a clear mission and purpose, understood and accepted by everyone in it?
- ☐ Has clear objectives?
- ☐ Has leadership?
- ☐ Has robust demand for its products and services?
- ☐ Lacks competitors?
- ☐ Has a well-defined product or service range that is of standard quality and tested effectiveness?
- ☐ Has a manageable number of stakeholders?
- ☐ Has long-term planning horizons?
- ☐ Is investing in the future?
- ☐ Provides a consistent level of service across all its service points?
- ☐ Is your personal supplier of choice?
- ☐ Has a sensible management and organisation structure that avoids the development of independent power bases, anti-corporate attitudes and professional fiefdoms?
- ☐ Is well managed and has a reasonable level of managerial freedom?
- ☐ Lives within its means and has control over its costs?
- ☐ Has good information systems?
- ☐ Has a well-trained and motivated workforce?
- ☐ Uses its resources efficiently and effectively?
- ☐ Treats its patients like valued customers?

Ask yourself these questions. What do you think, would you buy shares? Although we will all produce a different array of answers to these questions, perhaps depending on our personal experience of the NHS, I suspect that for most of us the negatives will outweigh the affirmatives by a considerable margin. We might safely draw two general business conclusions from this analysis.

Although it has undeniable strengths, the NHS has some important strategic weaknesses. In particular, it lacks a clear purpose. It has a fantastic capacity to do things and undergoes agonies in seeking to ensure that it does things right. But is it doing the right things? It is unclear whether the current role of the NHS is to meet all of everyone's healthcare needs, or a more limited subset. What should its role be in the future? Successive Secretaries of State have sent out conflicting signals about this. Would the NHS benefit from an adult, sensible debate about what it will and will not (or can and cannot) do in the future so that there is complete clarity about its purpose and boundaries?

Secondly, the NHS has a number of operational and managerial weaknesses. Perhaps the most important is the lack of managerial freedom. For example, NHS trusts were originally heralded as "self-governing". In practice, they are anything but. They have very limited powers (for example, concerning the raising of capital) and are subject to a whole range of controls by a whole range of bodies.

Some of this control is, of course, essential. But imagine if, instead of the current arrangements, trusts were given a ten-year service contract (with appropriate break points for underperformance) that set out what they must deliver and to what standards, and what they will be paid for. Suppose trusts were then left to get on and manage their own affairs, held accountable only to the terms of the contract. Would any of the "no answers change to 'yes'" over the decade?

Casting an investor's eye over the NHS may identify some ways of improving the service. But although the questions are simple, the answers may be radical or even uncomfortable.

David Williams is a director of Ernst & Young's Risk Consulting group.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Pernicious dumping

From Dr Denis MacShane, MP for Rotherham (Labour)

Sir, Carl Mortished's pertinent analysis of the world's steel industry (February 17) should not be allowed to obscure one crucial fact. Dumping is just as pernicious and unfair a trade practice as protectionism.

Despite the crisis in Asia, there has been very little effort to reduce steel output in the region. According to the latest figures China and Taiwan have increased production of steel. The UK, despite the long economic boom, saw crude steel production drop by 6.6 per cent in 1997 in contrast to Korea where output went down by 5.9 per cent and in India which saw a drop of just 2.9 per cent over the same period.

In other words, despite a decline in the Asian regional economy since 1997, Asian steel producers have not adjusted and have switched to soft European markets.

There is evidence in certain sectors, notably stainless steel wire, that dumping — selling at below production costs — is taking place. Dumping sends out all the wrong economic signals and distorts trade. In clear, prima facie evidence of dumping exists in steel then such market distortions need to be put right by countervailing duties. The opposite of protectionism cannot be dumping. Both need to be combated to promote free and fair trade. Yours faithfully, DENIS MACSHANE, Chair, Steel Group of MPs, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Orange loses its appeal

From Mrs Margaret Crick, Sir, In your Corporate Profile of Orange (February 8) you report that the company aims to have 10,000 mobile phone masts by 2001. This is alarming news for those who love the countryside.

Despite strong objections from our parish council, Orange has erected a 30-metre mast on a hill close to our village, which is in a beautiful and unspoiled rural part of Oxfordshire. The mast can be seen from a wide area, and intrudes into many lovely views across the valley.

Orange's Millennium Landmark Initiative might be trying to make masts less ugly, but if they can't be disguised in areas of high landscape value, should they be there at all?

Yours faithfully, MARGARET CRICK, 2 Blue Row, Swerford, Oxfordshire, OX7 4BA.

Unwanted designs on Gucci

Fraser Nelson reports on the latest battle being waged for the Italian fashion house

For all the elegance of its silk dresses and leather handbags, Gucci's boardroom in Milan has been the venue of some of the most brutal scenes in the history of the fashion industry.

Domenico De Sole, its chief executive, has seen them all. He joined in 1984 to adjudicate between the warring Gucci family, and when they all lost out to Investcorp, the investment bank, he was made head of the company.

"I say jokingly that we had World War I and World War II at Gucci," he says. "I am a veteran of both. World War I was inter-family feuding, and World War II was Maurizio Gucci and Investcorp."

Now, he is preparing for World War III. This time, the enemy is Bernard Arnault, chair-

man of LVMH, the scourge of Diageo, and once again the independence of the Italian fashion house is at stake.

For the past five weeks, M Arnault's company — which owns a stable of famous labels including Kenzo, Givenchy and Christian Dior — has been snapping up shares of Gucci, building a stake from 5.3 per cent to 34.5 per cent. Although this is billed as a "strategic investment", Signor De Sole believes his French counterpart is planning a coup of sorts.

Now, he has decided to go hostile. Yesterday he announced that Gucci was creat-

ing 20 million new shares, to be owned by an employee trust, which would counter any power LVMH had on Gucci's board.

He says the move was made with regret, but in self-defence. "When he first started buying the shares, I was open-minded. Then when he started buying more and more shares, I became somewhat suspicious, and now we see what his plans are."

M Arnault's demands are simple. He wants an LVMH-approved director to sit on Gucci board meetings, and has used his 34.5 per cent shareholding to force Signor

De Sole to call a shareholder meeting to make this possible. It may seem a reasonable request, but Signor De Sole suspects M Arnault wants to use the director as a Trojan horse — allowing LVMH to take control of Gucci without any takeover premium.

M Arnault believes this is a hysterical reaction. He has made long and gushing speeches about his admiration for Signor De Sole and Tom Ford, its senior designer. Without them, he says, he would not be interested in Gucci — and his investment is a mark of respect, not malice.

Both men say the fracas could have all worked out differently. M Arnault says he was willing to agree to all Gucci's demands, but only if he saw the directors' contracts. He suspects they contain "poison pills" clauses that could allow Mr Ford and Signor De Sole to abandon Gucci once LVMH has control.

Signor De Sole says his contract is none of LVMH's business — and says M Arnault must now either bid for the company or leave them in peace.

Last night, LVMH said it would take the whole issue to court, to finally decide what Gucci is required to do under Dutch law, as the company is listed on the Amsterdam stock exchange. With the main showdown not due until April, Signor De Sole's World War III is only just beginning.

Turner prize

AN INVITATION arrives to hear Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, giving his views on "Reflecting on 1998: Lessons from the Global Financial Turmoil". Sounds like fun, except for one thing. I have a pretty good idea where I shall be on March 9, and I suspect Turner, too, will be equally office-bound. It's Budget day.

The CBI confirms that the date has, indeed, been put back. Budget day has been set for weeks. Both of us are baffled why the invitations should only just have gone out for an event that has already been

cancelled, and I get no response from the issuer. So much for the business acumen, then, of the Centre for International Business Studies at South Bank University.

One hopes they rearrange the fixture before Turner leaves the CBI at the end of the year to write a book about the "Third Way". His early retirement has gone largely unnoticed, and it breaks what has, at times, been an uneasy relationship with the current President, Sir Clive Thompson.

This means both the CBI and the Institute of Directors are on the look-out for new chief executives this year. Plus approaching a dozen large public companies. Perhaps they should apply to South Bank's Centre for International Business Studies.

ANOTHER invitation, for the IoD's annual convention. "Power, People & Performance in the 21st Century" is the theme, late April the date. And never mind the next century, by April at least two of the speakers may not be in power or in any position to perform. Michael Grade's First Leisure is in bid/merger/disposal talks after a long period of stock market underperform-



ance. And Sir Paul Condon, of the Met Police, has troubles of his own, I believe.

Damned lies

THANKS to those readers who have attempted to explain the graph I reproduced yesterday from Electra Investment Trust, which showed assets underperforming the stock market even as chairman Michael Stoddart told shareholders the opposite.

The general view is that you can prove anything from statistics, especially if you choose the right starting point for comparisons. For a more technical view I am indebted to Professor Andrew Doswell of the Business Information Management unit at Glasgow Caledonian University.

It is "a combination of economy with statistical truth and semantics" he tells me.

Boyes own

SO WHERE was Roger Boyes, the Halifax finance director, yesterday? He missed both the press conference and the analysts' meeting. According to James Crosby, the new chief executive, he was ill.

When my colleague spoke to him, Boyes sounded fine. He had hurt his leg a while back but was still brought down to London for the event and spent the day skipping between several different offices. So: fit enough to make the journey, but not to mount the podium? Or was it because Boyes has a reputation for being spectacularly bearish about the bank's prospects?

THE forthcoming telephone number changes — again? What, again? — are tricky enough. They certainly seem to have defeated BT, which has put a briefing note in with recent phone bills explaining what the current codes are and how they will change by spring next year.

Alas, the new numbers are quite wrong, and the note has had to be reprinted. A reader spotted this and rang BT for an explanation. It was a "computer error", he was told. Actually, no; it was a mistake.

Net profit

THE official Manchester United Hotel that opened this week has some unexpected backing. Most of the £5 million needed was put up by private investors, one of them Howard Wilkinson, one-time manager of the England football team.

The link is through his wife, Sam, and Caroline Roberts, wife of the man behind the hotel, entrepreneur Peter Roberts. The two met when Sam, an interior designer, did some work for Caroline. Wilkinson tells me: "If she is involved somehow, nothing can prevent it from being a success."

MARTIN WALLER

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Wilkinson: backed the Manchester United Hotel

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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1990/91		Prior	%		1990/91		Prior	%	
High	Low	Company	(2)	+/-	%	High	Low	Company	(2)
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202	174	Co. of America	39	-		215	74	1985 Res	101
203	174	Co. of America	39	-		216	74	1985 Res	101
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358									

PRINTING & PAPER							
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692	270	AP	300	64 1/2	43	102 1/2	
693	270	AP	300	65 1/2	43	102 1/2	
694	270	AP	300	66 1/2	43	102 1/2	
695	270	AP	300	67 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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697	270	AP	300	69 1/2	43	102 1/2	
698	270	AP	300	70 1/2	43	102 1/2	
699	270	AP	300	71 1/2	43	102 1/2	
700	270	AP	300	72 1/2	43	102 1/2	
701	270	AP	300	73 1/2	43	102 1/2	
702	270	AP	300	74 1/2	43	102 1/2	
703	270	AP	300	75 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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705	270	AP	300	77 1/2	43	102 1/2	
706	270	AP	300	78 1/2	43	102 1/2	
707	270	AP	300	79 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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710	270	AP	300	82 1/2	43	102 1/2	
711	270	AP	300	83 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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713	270	AP	300	85 1/2	43	102 1/2	
714	270	AP	300	86 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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717	270	AP	300	89 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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725	270	AP	300	97 1/2	43	102 1/2	
726	270	AP	300	98 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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730	270	AP	300	102 1/2	43	102 1/2	
731	270	AP	300	103 1/2	43	102 1/2	
732	270	AP	300	104 1/2	43	102 1/2	
733	270	AP	300	105 1/2	43	102 1/2	
734	270	AP	300	106 1/2	43	102 1/2	
735	270	AP	300	107 1/2	43	102 1/2	
736	270	AP	300	108 1/2	43	102 1/2	
737	270	AP	300	109 1/2	43	102 1/2	
738	270	AP	300	110 1/2	43	102 1/2	
739	270	AP	300	111 1/2	43	102 1/2	
740	270	AP	300	112 1/2	43	102 1/2	
741	270	AP	300	113 1/2	43	102 1/2	
742	270	AP	300	114 1/2	43	102 1/2	
743	270	AP	300	115 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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745	270	AP	300	117 1/2	43	102 1/2	
746	270	AP	300	118 1/2	43	102 1/2	
747	270	AP	300	119 1/2	43	102 1/2	
748	270	AP	300	120 1/2	43	102 1/2	
749	270	AP	300	121 1/2	43	102 1/2	
750	270	AP	300	122 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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753	270	AP	300	125 1/2	43	102 1/2	
754	270	AP	300	126 1/2	43	102 1/2	
755	270	AP	300	127 1/2	43	102 1/2	
756	270	AP	300	128 1/2	43	102 1/2	
757	270	AP	300	129 1/2	43	102 1/2	
758	270	AP	300	130 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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760	270	AP	300	132 1/2	43	102 1/2	
761	270	AP	300	133 1/2	43	102 1/2	
762	270	AP	300	134 1/2	43	102 1/2	
763	270	AP	300	135 1/2	43	102 1/2	
764	270	AP	300	136 1/2	43	102 1/2	
765	270	AP	300	137 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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783	270	AP	300	155 1/2	43	102 1/2	
784	270	AP	300	156 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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787	270	AP	300	159 1/2	43	102 1/2	
788	270	AP	300	160 1/2	43	102 1/2	
789	270	AP	300	161 1/2	43	102 1/2	
790	270	AP	300	162 1/2	43	102 1/2	
791	270	AP	300	163 1/2	43	102 1/2	
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794	270	AP	300	166 1/2	43	102 1/2	
795	270	AP	300	167 1/2	43	102 1/2	
796	270	AP	300	168 1/2	43	102 1/2	
797	270	AP	300	169 1/2	43	102 1/2	
798	270	AP	300	170 1/2	43	102 1/2	
799	270	AP	300	171 1/2	43	102 1/2	
800	270	AP	300	172 1/2	43	102 1/2	

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17	100	120	14	21
18	100	120	14	21
19	100	120	14	21
20	100	120	14	21
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95	100	120	14	21
96	100	120	14	21
97	100	120	14	21
98	100	120	14	21
99	100	120	14	21
100	100			

52	12	Handbook	18%	27	12.8	01	Stansbury			
53	19	Handbook	18%	31	5.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
54	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
55	30	Roome Bldg	30%	45	36.3	131	St. Paul	170	170	98
56	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
57	45	St. Paul	31%	20	20.9	203	Stansbury	112	112	10
58	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
59	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
60	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
61	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
62	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
63	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
64	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
65	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
66	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
67	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
68	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
69	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
70	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
71	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
72	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
73	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
74	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
75	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
76	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
77	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
78	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
79	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
80	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
81	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
82	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
83	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
84	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
85	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
86	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
87	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
88	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
89	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
90	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
91	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
92	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
93	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
94	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
95	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
96	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
97	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
98	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
99	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24
100	1	Handbook	18%	21	4.1	15	Stansbury	500	5	24

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	678	28%	Faded & Blue	13% +	1	71	39
	116*	%	Upward	59 +	1	60	46
	72*	%	Late Cakes	28*		19	46

RETAILERS. FOOD

140- A&M Group†	153*	-	1	23	148		
51- Aldges	78 -	%	20.8	35			
35- Bodega	86*	-	2.8	118			
53- Dairy Farm Inc.	63 -	%	6.9				
157- Faragout†	240*	-	3.1	147			

WATER

98*	750	Ampman Waters†	764*	+ 19*	6.4	8.2
33*	273	Zell Samsy	291*		5.5	.8
	343*				2.5	.8

[illegible]

100	Al M. Grady	210	1	52	118	211	174	Am. Express	110	3v	
102	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
103	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
104	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
105	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
106	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
107	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
108	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
109	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
110	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
111	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
112	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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115	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
116	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
117	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
118	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
119	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
120	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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122	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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126	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
127	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
128	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
129	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
130	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
131	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
132	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
133	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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147	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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177	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
178	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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180	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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183	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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194	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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197	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
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199	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
200	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
201	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
202	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
203	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
204	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
205	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
206	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
207	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
208	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
209	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
210	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
211	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
212	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
213	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
214	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
215	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
216	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
217	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
218	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
219	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
220	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
221	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
222	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
223	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
224	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
225	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
226	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
227	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
228	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2
229	Alman	192	1	52	118	191	175	Amco Pac	99		31 1 1/2

1994	15-19	Female	1.1	0.4-1.8	1.1	0.4-1.8	1.1	0.4-1.8
1995	20-24	Female	2.5	1.0-4.0	2.5	1.0-4.0	2.5	1.0-4.0
1996	25-29	Female	3.5	1.5-5.5	3.5	1.5-5.5	3.5	1.5-5.5
1997	30-34	Female	4.5	2.0-7.0	4.5	2.0-7.0	4.5	2.0-7.0
1998	35-39	Female	5.5	2.5-8.5	5.5	2.5-8.5	5.5	2.5-8.5
1999	40-44	Female	6.5	3.0-10.0	6.5	3.0-10.0	6.5	3.0-10.0
2000	45-49	Female	7.5	3.5-11.5	7.5	3.5-11.5	7.5	3.5-11.5
2001	50-54	Female	8.5	4.0-13.0	8.5	4.0-13.0	8.5	4.0-13.0
2002	55-59	Female	9.5	4.5-14.5	9.5	4.5-14.5	9.5	4.5-14.5
2003	60-64	Female	10.5	5.0-16.0	10.5	5.0-16.0	10.5	5.0-16.0
2004	65-69	Female	11.5	5.5-17.5	11.5	5.5-17.5	11.5	5.5-17.5
2005	70-74	Female	12.5	6.0-19.0	12.5	6.0-19.0	12.5	6.0-19.0
2006	75-79	Female	13.5	6.5-20.5	13.5	6.5-20.5	13.5	6.5-20.5
2007	80-84	Female	14.5	7.0-22.0	14.5	7.0-22.0	14.5	7.0-22.0
2008	85-89	Female	15.5	7.5-23.5	15.5	7.5-23.5	15.5	7.5-23.5
2009	90-94	Female	16.5	8.0-25.0	16.5	8.0-25.0	16.5	8.0-25.0
2010	95-99	Female	17.5	8.5-26.5	17.5	8.5-26.5	17.5	8.5-26.5
2011	100+	Female	18.5	9.0-28.0	18.5	9.0-28.0	18.5	9.0-28.0
2012	105+	Female	19.5	9.5-29.5	19.5	9.5-29.5	19.5	9.5-29.5
2013	110+	Female	20.5	10.0-31.0	20.5	10.0-31.0	20.5	10.0-31.0
2014	115+	Female	21.5	10.5-32.5	21.5	10.5-32.5	21.5	10.5-32.5
2015	120+	Female	22.5	11.0-34.0	22.5	11.0-34.0	22.5	11.0-34.0
2016	125+	Female	23.5	11.5-35.5	23.5	11.5-35.5	23.5	11.5-35.5
2017	130+	Female	24.5	12.0-37.0	24.5	12.0-37.0	24.5	12.0-37.0
2018	135+	Female	25.5	12.5-38.5	25.5	12.5-38.5	25.5	12.5-38.5
2019	140+	Female	26.5	13.0-40.0	26.5	13.0-40.0	26.5	13.0-40.0
2020	145+	Female	27.5	13.5-41.5	27.5	13.5-41.5	27.5	13.5-41.5
2021	150+	Female	28.5	14.0-43.0	28.5	14.0-43.0	28.5	14.0-43.0
2022	155+	Female	29.5	14.5-44.5	29.5	14.5-44.5	29.5	14.5-44.5
2023	160+	Female	30.5	15.0-46.0	30.5	15.0-46.0	30.5	15.0-46.0
2024	165+	Female	31.5	15.5-47.5	31.5	15.5-47.5	31.5	15.5-47.5
2025	170+	Female	32.5	16.0-49.0	32.5	16.0-49.0	32.5	16.0-49.0
2026	175+	Female	33.5	16.5-50.5	33.5	16.5-50.5	33.5	16.5-50.5
2027	180+	Female	34.5	17.0-52.0	34.5	17.0-52.0	34.5	17.0-52.0
2028	185+	Female	35.5	17.5-53.5	35.5	17.5-53.5	35.5	17.5-53.5
2029	190+	Female	36.5	18.0-55.0	36.5	18.0-55.0	36.5	18.0-55.0
2030	195+	Female	37.5	18.5-56.5	37.5	18.5-56.5	37.5	18.5-56.5
2031	200+	Female	38.5	19.0-58.0	38.5	19.0-58.0	38.5	19.0-58.0
2032	205+	Female	39.5	19.5-59.5	39.5	19.5-59.5	39.5	19.5-59.5
2033	210+	Female	40.5	20.0-61.0	40.5	20.0-61.0	40.5	20.0-61.0
2034	215+	Female	41.5	20.5-62.5	41.5	20.5-62.5	41.5	20.5-62.5
2035	220+	Female	42.5	21.0-64.0	42.5	21.0-64.0	42.5	21.0-64.0
2036	225+	Female	43.5	21.5-65.5	43.5	21.5-65.5	43.5	21.5-65.5
2037	230+	Female	44.5	22.0-67.0	44.5	22.0-67.0	44.5	22.0-67.0
2038	235+	Female	45.5	22.5-68.5	45.5	22.5-68.5	45.5	22.5-68.5
2039	240+	Female	46.5	23.0-70.0	46.5	23.0-70.0	46.5	23.0-70.0
2040	245+	Female	47.5	23.5-71.5	47.5	23.5-71.5	47.5	23.5-71.5
2041	250+	Female	48.5	24.0-73.0	48.5	24.0-73.0	48.5	24.0-73.0
2042	255+	Female	49.5	24.5-74.5	49.5	24.5-74.5	49.5	24.5-74.5
2043	260+	Female	50.5	25.0-76.0	50.5	25.0-76.0	50.5	25.0-76.0
2044	265+	Female	51.5	25.5-77.5	51.5	25.5-77.5	51.5	25.5-77.5
2045	270+	Female	52.5	26.0-79.0	52.5	26.0-79.0	52.5	26.0-79.0
2046	275+	Female	53.5	26.5-80.5	53.5	26.5-80.5	53.5	26.5-80.5
2047	280+	Female	54.5	27.0-82.0	54.5	27.0-82.0	54.5	27.0-82.0
2048	285+	Female	55.5	27.5-83.5	55.5	27.5-83.5	55.5	27.5-83.5
2049	290+	Female	56.5	28.0-85.0	56.5	28.0-85.0	56.5	28.0-85.0
2050	295+	Female	57.5	28.5-86.5	57.5	28.5-86.5	57.5	28.5-86.5
2051	300+	Female	58.5	29.0-88.0	58.5	29.0-88.0	58.5	29.0-88.0
2052	305+	Female	59.5	29.5-89.5	59.5	29.5-89.5	59.5	29.5-89.5
2053	310+	Female	60.5	30.0-91.0	60.5	30.0-91.0	60.5	30.0-91.0
2054	315+	Female	61.5	30.5-92.5	61.5	30.5-92.5	61.5	30.5-92.5
2055	320+	Female	62.5	31.0-94.0	62.5	31.0-94.0	62.5	31.0-94.0
2056	325+	Female	63.5	31.5-95.5	63.5	31.5-95.5	63.5	31.5-95.5
2057	330+	Female	64.5	32.0-97.0	64.5	32.0-97.0	64.5	32.0-97.0
2058	335+	Female	65.5	32.5-98.5	65.5	32.5-98.5	65.5	32.5-98.5
2059	340+	Female	66.5	33.0-100.0	66.5	33.0-100.0	66.5	33.0-100.0
2060	345+	Female	67.5	33.5-101.5	67.5	33.5-101.5	67.5	33.5-101.5
2061	350+	Female	68.5	34.0-103.0	68.5	34.0-103.0	68.5	34.0-103.0
2062	355+	Female	69.5	34.5-104.5	69.5	34.5-104.5	69.5	34.5-104.5
2063	360+	Female	70.5	35.0-106.0	70.5	35.0-106.0	70.5	35.0-106.0
2064	365+	Female	71.5	35.5-107.5	71.5	35.5-107.5	71.5	35.5-107.5
2065	370+	Female	72.5	36.0-109.0	72.5	36.0-109.0	72.5	36.0-109.0
2066	375+	Female	73.5	36.5-110.5	73.5	36.5-110.5	73.5	36.5-110.5
2067	380+	Female	74.5	37.0-112.0	74.5	37.0-112.0	74.5	37.0-112.0
2068	385+	Female	75.5	37.5-113.5	75.5	37.5-113.5	75.5	37.5-113.5
2069	390+	Female	76.5	38.0-115.0	76.5	38.0-115.0	76.5	38.0-115.0
2070	395+	Female	77.5	38.5-116.5	77.5	38.5-116.5	77.5	38.5-116.5
2071	400+	Female	78.5	39.0-118.0	78.5	39.0-118.0	78.5	39.0-118.0
2072	405+	Female	79.5	39.5-119.5	79.5	39.5-119.5	79.5	39.5-119.5
2073	410+	Female	80.5	40.0-121.0	80.5	40.0-121.0	80.5	40.0-121.0
2074	415+	Female	81.5	40.5-122.5	81.5	40.5-122.5	81.5	40.5-122.5
2075	420+	Female	82.5	41.0-124.0	82.5	41.0-124.0	82.5	41.0-124.0
2076	425+	Female	83.5	41.5-125.5	83.5	41.5-125.5	83.5	41.5-125.5
2077	430+	Female	84.5	42.0-127.0	84.5	42.0-127.0	84.5	42.0-127.0
2078	435+	Female	85.5	42.5-128.5	85.5	42.5-128.5	85.5	42.5-128.5
2079	440+	Female	86.5	43.0-130.0	86.5	43.0-130.0	86.5	43.0-130.0
2080	445+	Female	87.5	43.5-131.5	87.5	43.5-131.5	87.5	43.5-131.5
2081	450+	Female	88.5	44.0-133.0	88.5	44.0-133.0	88.5	44.0-133.0
2082	455+	Female	89.5	44.5-134.5	89.5	44.5-134.5	89.5	44.5-134.5
2083	460+	Female	90.5	45.0-136.0	90.5	45.0-136.0	90.5	45.0-136.0
2084	465+	Female	91.5	45.5-137.5	91.5	45.5-137.5	91.5	45.5-137.5
2085	470+	Female	92.5	46.0-139.0	92.5	46.0-139.0	92.5	46.0-139.0
2086	475+	Female	93.5	46.5-140.5	93.5	46.5-140.5	93.5	46.5-140.5
2087	480+	Female	94.5	47.0-142.0	94.5	47.0-142.0	94.5	47.0-142.0
2088	485+	Female	95.5	47.5-143.5	95.5	47.5-143.5	95.5	47.5-143.5
2089	490+	Female	96.5	48.0-145.0	96.5	48.0-145.0	96.5	48.0-145.0
2090	495+	Female	97.5	48.5-146.5	97.5	48.5-146.5	97.5	48.5-146.5
2091	500+	Female	98.5	49.0-148.0	98.5	49.0-148.0	98.5	49.0-148.0
2092	505+	Female	99.5	49.5-149.5	99.5	49.5-149.5	99.5	49.5-149.5
2093	510+	Female	100.5	50.0-151.0	100.5	50.0-151.0	100.5	50.0-151.0
2094	515+	Female	101.5	50.5-152.5	101.5	50.5-152.5	101.5	50.5-152.5
2095	520+	Female	102.5	51.0-154.0	102.5	51.0-154.0	102.5	51.0-154.0
2096	525+	Female	103.5	51.5-155.5	103.5	51.5-155.5	103.5	51.5-155.5
2097	530+	Female	104.5	52.0-157.0	104.5	52.0-157.0	104.5	52.0-157.0
2098	535+	Female	105.5	52.5-158.5	105.5	52.5-158.5	105.5	52.5-158.5
2099	540+	Female	106.5	53.0-160.0	106.5	53.0-160.0	106.5	53.0-160.0
2100	545+	Female	107.5	53.5-161.5	107.5	53.5-161.5	107.5	53.5-161.5
2101	550+	Female	108.5	54.0-163.0	108.5	54.0-163.0	108.5	54.0-163.0
2102	555+	Female	109.5	54.5-164.5	109.5	54.5-164.5	109.5	54.5-164.5
2103	560+	Female	110.5	55.0-166.0	110.5	55.0-166.0	110.5	55.0-166.0
2104	565+	Female	111.5	55.5-167.5	111.5	55.5-167.5	111.5	55.5-167.5
2105	570+	Female	112.5	56.0-169.0	112.5	56.0-169.0	112.5	56.0-169.0
2106	575+	Female	113.5	56.5-170.5	113.5	56.5-170.5	113.5	56.5-170.5
2107	580+	Female	114.5	57.0-172.0	114.5	57.0-172.0	114.5	57.0-172.0
2108	585+	Female	115.5	57.5-173.5	115.5	57.5-173.5	115.5	57.5-173.5
2109	590+	Female	116.5	58.0-175.0	116.5	58.0-175.0	116.5	58.0-175.0
2110	595+	Female	117.5	58.5-176.5	117.5	58.5-176.5	117.5	58.5-176.5
2111	600+	Female	118.5	59.0-178.0	118.5	59.0-178.0	118.5	59.0-178.0
2112	605+	Female	119.5	59.5-179.5	119.5	59.5-179.5	119.5	59.5-179.5
2113	610+	Female	120.5	60.0-181.0	120.5	60.0-181.0	120.5	60.0-181.0
2114	615+	Female	121.5	60.5-182.5	121.5	60.5-182.5	121.5	60.5-182.5
2115	620+	Female	122.5	61.0-184.0	122.5	61.0-184.0	122.5	61.0-184.0
2116	625+	Female	123.5	61.5-185.5	123.5	61.5-185.5	123.5	61.5-185.5
2117	630+	Female	124.5	62.0-187.0	124.5	62.0-187.0	124.5	62.0-187.0
2118	635+	Female	125.5	62.5-188.5	125.5	62.5-188.5	125.5	62.5-188.5
2119	640+	Female	126.5	63.0-190.0	126.5	63.0-190.0	126.5	63.0-190.0
2120	645+	Female	127.5	63.5-191.5	127.5	63.5-191.5	127.5	

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34	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
35	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
36	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
37	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
38	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
39	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
40	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
41	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
42	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
43	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
44	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
45	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
46	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
47	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
48	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
49	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
50	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
51	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
52	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
53	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
54	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
55	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
56	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
57	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
58	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
59	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
60	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
61	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
62	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
63	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
64	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
65	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
66	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
67	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
68	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
69	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
70	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
71	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
72	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
73	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
74	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
75	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
76	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
77	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
78	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
79	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
80	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
81	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
82	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
83	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
84	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
85	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
86	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
87	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
88	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
89	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
90	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
91	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
92	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
93	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
94	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
95	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
96	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
97	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
98	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
99	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2
100	130	SGS	21%	1.2	17.2

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RETAILERS: FOOD			WATER		
140-ASDA Supermt	153-7	1 23 144			
141-Asda Supermt	78	1 20 8			
142-Barnes	101	1 11 11			
143-Barnes	78	1 20 8			
144-Dairy Farm Int	63	1 19 147			
145-Dorchester	109	1 1 1			
146-Essex	250	1 2 1			
147-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
148-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
149-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
150-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
151-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
152-Fishpond	250	1 2 1			
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1111



POP

Overdosing
on burgers
and Elvis

PAGE 36

THE TIMES ARTS

POP

Lifting the
lid on the
soul of Blur

PAGE 37



Fifty years at the cutting edge

THEATRE: Nottingham's Playhouse is celebrating half a century of trailblazing. Daniel Rosenthal reports

Nottingham's theatregoers should raise a glass to the memory of Alderman Roland Green. At a meeting of the city's Labour-led council in February 1961, the members voted on whether to commit about £300,000 to the construction of a new home for the Playhouse theatre: 33 were in favour and 33 against. As Lord Mayor, Green had the casting vote — and chose culture ahead of budgetary restraint.

Had he sided with the opposition, the Playhouse would surely not have reached its fiftieth anniversary season, which resumes next week with a new production of Beckett's *Endgame*. Nor would Nottingham have become such an important destination in the careers of John Neville, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, Richard Eyre and dozens of others.

The original Playhouse had opened with Shaw's *Man and Superman* on November 8, 1948, in a converted cinema. In the name of quality, André Van Gysegem, the Playhouse's first director, took the revolutionary step of mounting a new production every fortnight, rather than every week as in most rep.

The actor-director John Harrison took charge in 1951, handing over to Val May six years later. Frank Dunlop was the director when the new Playhouse was completed in Wellington Circus in 1963. Designed by Peter Moro, it boasted a striking, glass-fronted foyer, a circular, 750-seat auditorium and a stage four times deeper than the Playhouse's first. The opening of the new building and the appointment as director of dashing leading man John Neville ushered in what some consider the Playhouse's golden age.

Extending the Playhouse's impressive commitment to education, Neville started a Saturday morning youth club. He introduced lunchtime poetry readings and Sunday night jazz. Rising stars whom Neville directed included Dench, Alan Howard and "a very good young actor I discovered in Ipswich". Step forward Ian McKellen, then 24.

Neville's most celebrated coup established a precedent echoed by last year's Almeida/Kevin Spacey partnership. While filming Melville's *Billy Budd* in 1962, Neville had become friends with Robert Ryan, rugged star of westerns and war movies. Five years later Ryan took a vast pay cut and packed out the Playhouse as Othello opposite Neville's Iago. "There had never been a Hollywood star in regional theatre before," says Neville.

Only Neville's departure sours the story. In 1967 he asked the Arts Council to raise the Playhouse's annual grant to £57,000, was offered £50,000 and resigned, saying

"We believed Nottingham was the epicentre of British theatre, more important than London"

the sum would only allow him to "mark time". When the board regretfully accepted his resignation, he suddenly withdrew it and the controversy rumbled on for a year.

Stuart Burge's regime between 1968 and 1973 included Michael Hordern in *King Lear*, although perhaps his shrewdest move was his choice of successor. Richard Eyre, then 30, was headhunted from the Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh, together with his wife, Sue Birtwistle, whom Burge hired to set up the Roundabout theatre-in-education company (still a major part of the programme).

Eyre made David Hare resident dramatist and, among many memorable productions, directed a new play which his board tried hard to veto, but which Eyre now cites as a landmark: Trevor Griffiths's bruising *Comedians*. He has reservations about the Playhouse building ("an exhilarating piece of architecture, although not a great place to

put on plays"), but none about the significance of his six years there: "If I hadn't run Nottingham, I would never have been offered the chance to run the National."

"John Neville, Stuart Burge and I believed Nottingham was the epicentre of British theatre, more important than London. It's very difficult to imagine convincing yourself of that now, because the big companies have swallowed up so many of the resources."

By 1990 there was a chance that the Playhouse's core funding might be withdrawn. However, under the executive director Ruth Mackenzie and the artistic directors Pip Broughton and, later, Martin Duncan, the financial position and the Playhouse's profile were transformed. Mackenzie's "local/global" policy saw in-house productions take three world tours, while successful efforts to expand the core audience and bring in more people from Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities helped the Playhouse to win 1996's Prudential Award for creative innovation.

Leading European directors such as Sílvia Puerres were invited to work with English actors for the first time, and Duncan, who will leave office after directing James Bowlam and Alistair McGowan in *Endgame*, believes this internationalist approach "smashed open" local visions of theatre.

What of the Playhouse in 1999? Duncan's successor will be appointed shortly, while Venu Dhupa, the executive director, says increased attendance has helped to dent a five-figure deficit. Pending lony approval, a major renovation of the theatre will begin in the summer, including a large sculpture by the Turner Prize winner Anish Kapoor. Official birthday celebrations are planned for June, when, says Dhupa, the foyer will contain a "large, edible installation" from which visitors can take chunks. Having funded the construction of the Playhouse, Nottingham's taxpayers will be taking a piece of it home.

Endgame is at the Nottingham Playhouse from February 24 to March 10; Krapp's Last Tape runs from March 11 to 13 (0115-941 9419)



Touched by Tinseltown: Robert Ryan (left) as Othello and John Neville as Iago in the Nottingham Playhouse's 1967 production of *Othello*

Success
at any
price

30p

THE TIMES

● Richard Morrison is on holiday

Counsel for the slobs

Before I start patronising Rob Becker's one-man burlesque for terminal blockiness, I should make some admissions. As a neo-bachelor in New York in the mid-1980s, I would get depressed by the enormous pile of dishes cluttering the sink, yet my solution was more often to surround them with anti-cockroach powder than to wash them. Then I would sprinkle the same stuff round my unmade bed and enter the Land of Nod. I can imagine my wife dreaming of doing that and subjecting her dream to Jungian analysis; but never would she do it.

What's the relevance of this to the jaunty apologia for trad maleness that Becker himself performed on Broadway but a tousel Aussie called Mark Little is playing in London? More than I would like to believe. The critic in me saw abundant evidence that Little was impersonating the sort of cheerily un-



sophisticated extrovert whose life consists of his television, his garage, his fishing rod and his love of what was presumably baseball in America but is cricket here. The man in me ruefully identified with behaviour that ranged from wondering why floors need cleaning to finding it demeaning to ask strangers for directions when I got lost in my car.

"I stand before you in defence of the caveman," implausibly declares the affably suburban Little, and, aided by a quaint apotheosis involving the ghost of some sage Flintstone, enunciates an answer to those who say there are two genders, "women and assholes". He comes up with the not-too-original notion that

men are still hunters, taciturn slobs myopically obsessed with achieving their ends, and women are gatherers, meaning lovers of shopping, chattering and stopping to examine their feelings.

Yet to say that his "defence" sometimes comes across as self-flagellation, or that he trades in stereotypes, or that it is hard to evolve an anthropological theory that embraces (say) Roy Strong, Vinnie Jones and St Simon Stylites, is to take it all a bit solemnly. At times I felt I was travelling with a monomaniac cabbie who could bang on about gender politics from London to Sydney if only the sea were tarmac. But often I succumbed to the show's good nature, as did those around me. We all recognised something of ourselves in his observant humour.

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE

Under the scalpel

RECITAL



movements of the latter work were extraordinarily impressive. The search for consolation in the D flat major middle section of the *Marche funèbre* was beautifully done.

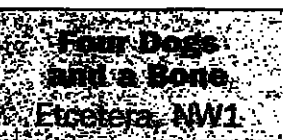
Orie's complaint, if any, would have been directed not

at the performance of eight of his *Lyric Pieces* but at their presentation. It was not helpful to run them together with no clear distinction between them. Not that this was very important in comparison with Pletnev's insight into harmonies that would have been revolutionary in their time.

As for Schumann, he might have objected to the, theoretically, unacceptable text chosen for the *Etudes Symphoniques*, including pieces he had definitively rejected and excluding one he had definitively left in. Perverse though Pletnev's selection was, however, it worked uncommonly well.

Indeed, the two rejected variations were most persuasively coloured and were integrated by the emotional intensity that prevailed throughout.

GERALD LARNER



only the dedication that rings true. She, as much as Collette (Amy Robbins), her rival actress, as much as Bradley, the film's producer, and Victor, the writer, wants only one thing: success. They are the four dogs of John Patrick Shanley's play, first seen at New York's Manhattan Theatre Club, and only because of its length (70 minutes) playing here at a pub theatre in Camden Town.

Presenting some of the ruses that treachery will employ, the play comes with a quote from Machiavelli: "Among other evils which being unarmed brings you, it causes you to be despised." And thus, the characters whose weapons turn out to possess real cutting edges triumph and those with paper swords end up with their backs to the camera.

Shanley, the Oscar-winning writer of *Moonstruck*, knows the deadly dodges of movie-making. Here is the producer (Paul Trussell) harassed on three sides by money, script and weather, and on his underside by an indelicate discomfort. Here is Alastair Mackenzie's first-time movie-writer, fighting to keep his pure vision; and deadliest of all, and funniest, the actresses scheming to shove themselves into more prominent shots. Assured performances by all four, and direction by Crispin Bonham Carter that introduces clever overlap of scenes.

JEREMY KINGSTON

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CHANGING TIMES

LISTINGS

A Fay Weldon play

ARTS

POP GIG
Jonathan Richman live

RECOMMENDED THIS WEEKEND

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargreaves

LONDON

LIFT OFF: Two cool guys, one black, one white, to be black, face problems after leaving school in a new play by Roy Williams. In the new play by Roy Williams. In the new play by Roy Williams. In the new play by Roy Williams.

CHAMBER MUSIC: Composer and musician Thomas Adès appears as pianist in this concert featuring two of his own works framed by pieces by



Composer Thomas Adès plays at the Wigmore

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
■ House full, returns only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN: Mark Lalle makes his West End acting debut in Rob Becker's new comedy, tracing the origins of the man in the cave. (Theatre Royal, Haymarket) (0171-930 8800).

BARFACED CHIC: Fascinating Ade play for a month before setting off on their latest national tour. This time Claire Peters directs. (Theatre Royal, Haymarket) (0171-930 8800).

TOAST: Debut play by Richard Bean, set in a bakery disturbed by a new arrival. Richard Wilson directs. (Ambassadors) (0171-585 5000).

THE MIMAS: Irish all-girl satirical singing trio bring harmony, hilarity and a sharp look at humanity. (Drama Hall) (0171-437 8270).

THE CUB: After ten years Decca Donnell directs Cornelia's 1837 classic again, this time performed in

French (with English subtitles). Received an ovation at the Avignon Festival. (Riverside Studios) (0161-237 1111).

COHENBERG: Hesterberg joyfully calls on Niall Bohn in her new play. (Theatre Royal, Haymarket) (0171-930 8800).

THE PRO: Co-production with Kneighthe Theatre of Cornwall, presenting Nick Drake's new play, set at the turn of the century where the army in the north is to quell the rivalry between two towns. (Cottesloe) (0171-432 3000).

AND THE BROTHER TOO: Eamon Morrissey returns to the intimate comic world of Peter O'Brien, revealing more about "The Man" and his curious view of the world. (Theatre) (0171-225 1000).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

AFFLICTION (19): Paul Schrader's bruising portrait of a frustrated small-town cop. Nick Nolte and James Coburn put in powerful performances as father and son, caught in a cycle of male violence, as the town reels from a mysterious accident.

THIS YEAR'S LOVE (19): David Byrne's comedy starts the mess at Camden Town meets rock of their love lives among the junk stalls. A mechanical plot deflates the hipster atmosphere. With Kate Winslet, Jennifer Ehle, Douglas Henshall, Dougray Scott, Catherine McCormack and Ian Hart.

HOLY MAN (PG): Eddie Murphy's naive spiritual guru and Jeff Goldblum's sleazy TV executive team up to set craggy products on a shopping channel. Caught in a cycle of male violence, as the town reels from a mysterious accident.

FOREIGN LAND (19): Gripping underclass thriller about two young adults, set in Brazil and Lisbon. A bunch of quality over quantity. Directed by the highly collectible Walter Salles.

NEWS FROM THE GOOD LORD (19): Over-the-top French comedy from Didier Le Pêcheur. Six weirdos go looking for an Author. Some surreal patches of lunacy. But a lot of this is truly tedious.

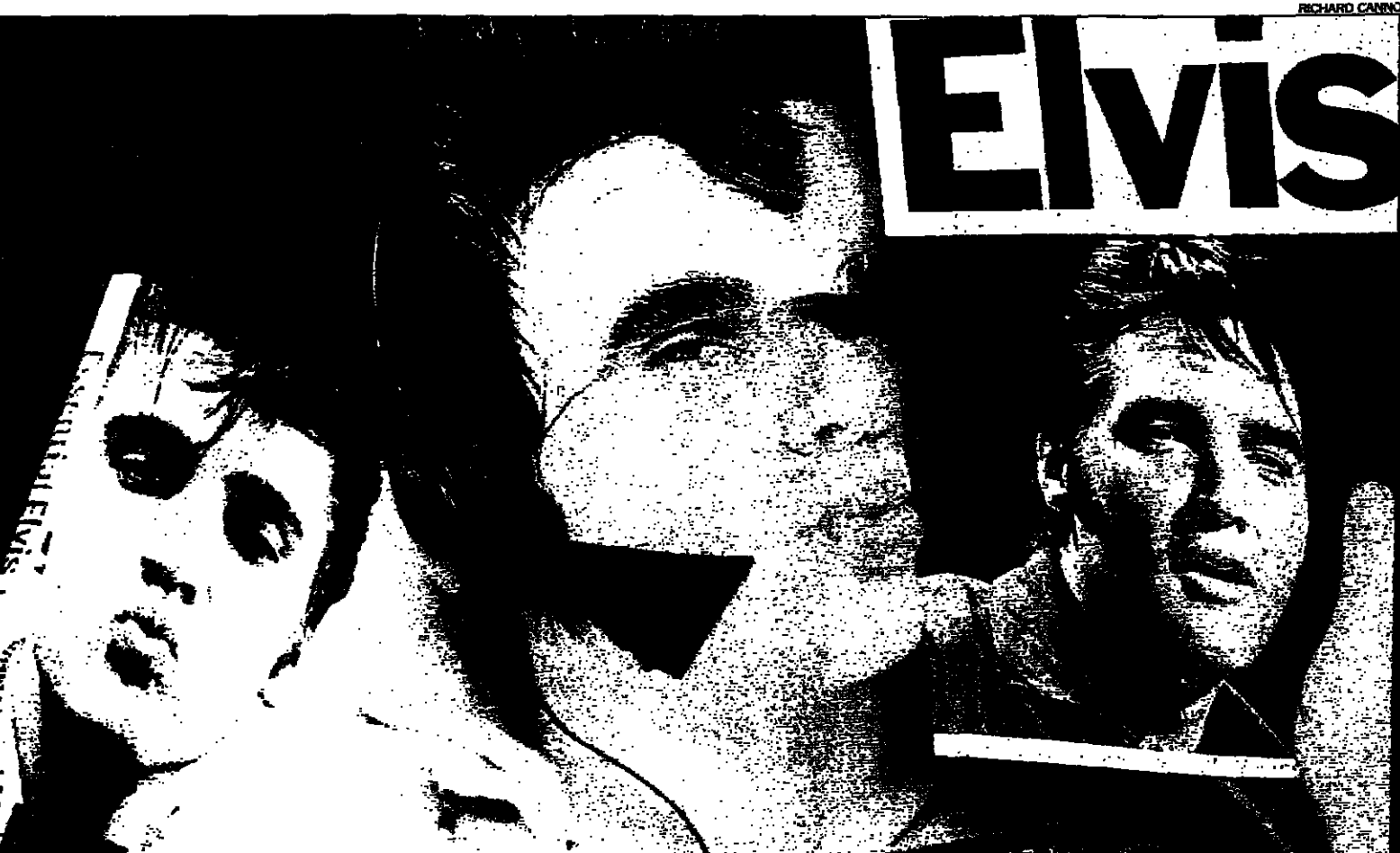
CURRENT: LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (PG): Roberto Benigni's romantic Second World War tale stitches a disturbing comedy into the Holocaust. Surprisingly well done, but the comic treatment of the material is at best nauseating.

YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS (18): Neil LaBute's sex-obsessed comedy of manners tracks the insolence of his yuppie. Privately, with Nastassja Kinski, Aaron Eckhart and John Cusack.

DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART (PG): Jenny Seagrove and Anthony Edwards star in a quirky Valentine's comedy where they outwit the clearly demotivated Charles Dance. Seagrove is magnificent.

JACK FROST (PG): Michael Keaton comes back to life as a comical, spunky quality time with his son. The heavenly doesn't come quick enough.

Caitlin Moran dons the jumpsuit, gets in the burgers, and pigs out to the King for 24 hours



Don't worry, Elvis, you'll have your revenge: one day Caitlin Moran's children might well stumble across this photograph of Mummy as a young girl

Stuck in Disgraceland

I have never loved Elvis. I stand in the same corner as tartan-wearing Brummie band the Wonder Stuff (they called their third album *New Love Elvis*) and rap group Public Enemy (who explained, very reasonably, that "Elvis was a hero to millions, but he never meant [rude word] to me"). I just don't get it: he looked too much like the sulky Tanita Twist in *My So-British Tikaram* to be fanciable; I genuinely think all three girls in Bananarama have better voices; and I am alone in the world in not being able to do an Elvis impression. I have to hold my curled lip in place with a finger, and when I say "Thankyouvermush," it sounds Yugoslavian. Woeiful.

But he's the King. He's sold 500 million billion albums. When grey-faced men with big sideburns talk about him, tears pool in their eyes. As, given this evidence, I appeared to be missing out on the musical equivalent of the discovery of the internal combustion engine, I decided to make a single, heroic effort: immerse myself fully in Elvis, and become either drowned or baptised in the attempt. Short of flying to Memphis in a jet shaped like a quiff, a 24-hour

Elvisathon seemed to be the only answer. So... 7.30am. Breakfast. A Double Whopper. With Cheese. Quite nice, really: feels like Christmas. Feel regretful that I didn't attempt Elvis's admirable breakfast from 1972: five hot fudge ice-cream sundaes before he passed out.

7.36am. First record, from early Elvis. Recognise *That's All Right Mama* and *Mystery Train* — they're the hissing, yellow ghosts documentary-makers use during the Elvis Birthplace segment. It's all dust-bowl and shotgun wedding and utterly, utterly alien. Feel nervous. "I've never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl..."

10.11am. It's post-G.I. Hollywood Elvis. Hateful jaunty: "I've never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl/And I never kissed a girl..."

1.15pm. Get dressed in Elvis clothes. Jumpsuit very comfortable, like pyjamas. 1.30pm. Open-to-the-waist tunic a bit drafty. Rearrange spangly cape.

1.32pm. Still too cold. Add vest and jumper to ensemble. Gain insight into why Elvis wanted to insulate himself with burger-fat.

4pm. A thought strikes. He moved so smooth and hot they called him Elvis the Pelvis. What were the chances of that? Of the 0.000001 people born every millennium who become famous for their hips, the most famous of them all

6.09pm. Eighty burger of the day. Now bypassing same seed bun and going straight for the meat — takes up less space inside. Feel like I'm packing my stomach like a holiday suitcase. Internal hinges bulging. Diamante sash becoming tight. Have one of Elvis's famous bananas and peanut butter sandwiches (bananas will "soak up" meat, and turn it into good minerals).

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Post modern lover

Best known as an off-beat cult hero, Jonathan Richman first came to prominence in the punk era. In 1972 his band, the Modern Lovers, recorded a series of demos with John Cale as producer. The songs, which included *Roadrunner* and *Pablo Picasso*, were so far ahead of their time that when they were finally given a release four years later, they amounted to a full-blown punk album. Richman went on to a solo career and recently appeared in the romantic comedy *There's Something About Mary*, in which he played a one-man Greek chorus and got to preview songs from his new album, *I'm So Confused*.

LIVE GIG
Jonathan Richman
Jazz Cafe, NW1

As the first show in a three-night run at London's Jazz Cafe showed, a live venue is still the setting that suits him best. Accompanied by his stand-up drummer, Tommy Larkins, Richman kicked straight into the 1950s-style *Fender Stratocaster*, and immediately won over the audience by unstrapping his guitar and casually dancing across the stage with it.

The first thing that you notice about Richman is how incredibly young and vulnerable he looks. Now 47, Richman came across like an overgrown child; a notion that was reinforced by the endearing way he apologised for being late and by new songs such as *True Love Is Not Nice*.

Although the songs from Richman's latest album went down well, it was *Pablo Picasso*, followed by *I Was Dancing at the Lesbian Bar*, which got the best response. The audience sang along with the title line of the latter, while Richman danced with his guitar. Later on, he paid tribute to his favourite band in the Velvet Underground and by the end of the set grown men were screaming out, "We love you".

The encore was called *The Night Is Still Young*, which led the crowd to expect more. And, after about five minutes, Richman returned. But, rather than playing a song, he simply said: "That's the end of my show — I just didn't want you to wait around." He then sang *Arrivederci Roma* — his black-and-white stripes making him look like a bizarre gondolier.

ANN SCANLON

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POP ALBUMS

Sebadoh find ambition

A heart full of soul

Damon Albarn has checked in to Heartbreak Hotel and produced Blur's best album to date.

Nigel Williamson had a foretaste

In one of those twists of fate, Alan McGee was in Stockholm attending a Sony conference on the day that Blur chose to stage the world launch of their new album, *13*, in the Swedish capital.

As the head of Oasis's record label, Creation, McGee was one of the generals at the heart of the ludicrous battle of the bands waged at the zenith of Britpop a year or two ago between Britain's two premier groups. In fact, McGee was spotted neither at the Munchenbygget, an old converted brewery where Blur played all but two of the songs from their new album to a music industry audience which had flown in from as far away as Brazil, Japan, and Australia; nor at the triumphant party afterwards, where Damon Albarn and what seemed like half of Sweden celebrated until dawn at the Spy Bar, Stockholm's coolest nightclub.

At the height of the battle of the bands, Oasis were deemed by most observers to have emerged comfortable winners, the coolest icons in the Cool Britannia pantheon. Listening to the new Blur album, it becomes apparent that what Oasis won was little more than a pointless skirmish over a plot of no man's land called Britpop that has since been left far behind by Albarn and company, who all the time had their sights set on more expansive horizons.

If McGee had been at the Blur showcase, it would surely have reduced him to despair. The band's last album, *Blur*, had already indicated a move away from the breezy pop songs of *Parklife*, the only album of the mid-1990s to challenge the supremacy of Oasis. But if it wasn't already dead on its feet, Britpop is buried forever by *13*, an audacious collection of songs that makes

much of what Blur have done in the past sound one-dimensional. It is an emotionally charged, avant-garde panoramic soundscape that sets the initiative and will set the new millennium. In short, *13* is the album of their lives, an awesome, futuristic piece of work that feels as if they have been in training for ten years simply to make this record.

Yet it was still a bold step to play almost in its entirety an album that was completely unfamiliar to most of those present and Albarn later paid tribute to the audience. "Thank you for being so appreciative. It's not easy listening to a dozen songs you've never heard before," he said.

In fact, it had not really been difficult at all because, despite a more experimental sound coaxed out of the band by producer William Orbit (who last year assisted Madonna's latest reinvention on *Ray of Light*), the songs on *13* display an emotional commitment we have rarely heard from Blur before. There was a celebratory encore including *Beetlebum*, *Popsicle* and *Song 2* but by then we were already convinced that we had just witnessed the unveiling of the album of the year. The emotion comes from the fact that Albarn wrote many of the songs in the wake of his break-up with his long-time partner, Elastica's Justine Frischmann.

And it shows: Albarn is no longer the wryly detached observer we are familiar with from songs such as *Girls and Boys* or *Stereotype*, and you can see why he describes *13* as Blur's "soul record" — not that he sounds like Otis Redding, simply that misery always did have the best tunes and here Albarn bares it all.

The pain is there for all to hear on *Tender*, the bitter-sweet eight-minute single com-

On the couch: Blur's new album, *13*, explores the damaged soul of Damon Albarn after the break-up of his relationship with Justine Frischmann

plete with a gospel choir on which he sings "Tender is the touch of someone that you love too much/Tender is my heart for screwing up my life/Lord, I need to find someone who can heal my mind".

It is there on *Trailer Park*, on *Trimmi Trabb* and on *No Distance Left to Run*, with which they closed the set in Stockholm. "It's over, there's no need to tell me/Hope you're with someone who makes you feel safe in your sleep tonight/I want to kill myself for trying to stay in your life... When you see me, please turn your back and walk away/I don't want to see you," Albarn sings, and you can almost hear his heart breaking.

Musically the album's dark atmosphere and spooky moods are closer in spirit to such contemporary sonic adventurers as Beck, Tortoise and Spiritualized than Britpop inspirations such as the Beatles and the Kinks. In 1995, with the Blur-Oasis war raging, Albarn predicted, tongue only partly in cheek, that by 1999 Blur would be the most important band in the world. When the planet at last gets the chance to hear *13* next month, who will argue that he was not right?

● *13* is released on March 15. The single, *Tender*, is released on Monday.

ARTS

JAZZ ALBUMS

Two promising debuts

New life in the reeds

GILAD ATZMON TRIO

Take It or Leave It...

(Roc Jazz FICD)

SINCE settling in London in the mid-1990s, the Israeli-born reedsman Gilad Atzmon has established himself as a passionately ebullient improviser, as at home with the quicksilver intricacies of bebop as the compressed energy of rock and funk. Here, on his debut CD as leader, he spearheads a muscular but supple trio completed by the alternately whirling and singing bass of Val Mink and the tumbling drums of Sam Anstee Brown — in an intelligently varied programme of standards (*My Funny Valentine*, *These Fool-*

JAZZ ALBUMS

ish Things, *Our Love is Here to Stay*) and powerful, scurrying originals.

Atzmon's also playing has all the scalding intensity of, say, Jackie McLean or Kenny Garrett, but his clarinet playing is utterly distinctive: plangent and inventive, its adaptability enables Atzmon not so much to reinterpret the standards upon which it is employed.

LOZ SPEYER QUARTET

Two Kinds of Blue

(33 Jazz 043 CD)

ANOTHER 1990s band with an electric guitar where once a piano would have been, the Loz Speyer Quartet play sparky, open, attractive jazz with all the punch and accessibility customarily associated with rock music. Speyer himself, on both trumpet and the slightly warmer-toned flugelhorn, packs a solid punch; guitarist Andy Jones is a confident partner, equally adept at the limber fluency associated with jazz guitar and the exuberance frequently heard from rock soloists. Propelled by the hard-driving drums of Tony Bianco and the eloquent bass of Richard Jeffries, *Two Kinds of Blue* is a promising debut.

CHRIS PARKER

Alternative definite article

SEBADOH

The Sebadoh

(Domino WIGCD57 £14.99)

HAVING spent longer on the margins of alternative rock than it takes most groups to achieve global stardom and then fade back into obscurity, Sebadoh are showing definite signs of ambition along with the definite article that graces their impressive seventh album, *The Sebadoh*.

The battle for the band's soul continues between singers and guitarists Lou Barlow and Jason Loewenstein, both of whom garner seven song-writing credits apiece from among the album's 15 tracks (the other one going to the band's new drummer Russ Pollard for *Break Free*, a song that sounds like an instant grunge standard).

Barlow is the more engaging singer and clearly the more accomplished writer. "I fly no flag, ever," he once declared, and his songs range from the up-tempo hit single *Flame*, with its slurring four-on-the-floor beat, to the poignant *Love is Stronger*, a sublime rock-ballad which proceeds from the intriguing proposition that "Love is stronger than the truth". But Loewenstein is no slouch, even if he does parade his Nirvana/Pearl Jam influences a little too obviously on the likes of *It's All You and Decide*.

If the pair simply pooled their efforts under a joint credit along the lines of the Jagger/Richards trademark, the comparisons between the two of them would cease to be an issue overnight. More to the point, all three musicians are pulling together on *The Sebadoh* in a way that not only brings a new dimension to the band's hitherto rather ragged sound, but also breathes fresh life into a nonconformist strand of rock'n'roll that has been looking decidedly pallid, until now.

LINKS

Sebadoh: www.sebadoh.com
Jaguar: www.jaguar.co.uk
The Prodigy: www.theprodigy.co.uk
Reverend & the Maccabees: www.reverendandthemaccabees.com

TELEVISION:
Top of the Pops, BBC1, tonight 7.30pm
Later With Jools Holland, BBC2, tonight 1.05am
Radio:
1X Top 40, Radio 1, Sunday 4pm

NEW POP ALBUMS

JIMI TENOR

Organism

(Vamp WAPCD60 £14.99)

THE Finnish keyboard, sax and flute player Jimi Tenor remains one of pop's more engaging enigmas. His last album, *Intervention*, was an inspired if bizarre mixture of one-note techno themes and loungecore lunacy underpinned by some surprisingly sophisticated jazz-fusion chops. Was he for real? Apparently so, for here he is again with *Organism*, an even more unlikely collection of lo-fi productions ranging from the ZZ Top-meets-Funkadelic groove of *Total Devastation* to the Björk-esque soundscape of *City Sleeps* ("I lie in the quiet gloom of my bed and inhale the scent of ozone").

The album is steeped in movie and video-game lore — *Serious Love* is adapted from the soundtrack to the Nintendo *Goldeneye* game — and there is a seriously spooky undercurrent to *Muchmo* and the single, *Year of the Apocalypse*. Although he does not have the confidence to sing without camouflaging his voice in layers of echo and distortion effects, the instrumental drama in tracks such as *Xinotepe*, *Heat* and the creepy love song *Sleep* is more than enough to command attention, if not necessarily affection.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Prodigy Present The Dirtchamber Sessions**Volume One*

(JCL 128 £15.99)

NOT a Prodigy album despite its misleading title, *The Dirtchamber Sessions* is a DJ/mix set by Liam Howlett, structured along the lines of *Live at the Social* by the Chemical Brothers and Fatboy Slim's *On the Floor at the Boutique*. Thus, a vast number of records by other acts (about 50 in 50 minutes) are seamlessly intercut, cross-faded and segued together by Howlett, with everything from Barry White to the Sex Pistols being shoe-horned into one, long, big beat-driven soundtrack.

Kool Keith's *Smack My Bitch Up* rap gets another prominent airing, alongside a snippet from *Time to Get Ill* by the Beastie Boys, who were one of Prodigy's most energetic

ence with quirky melodic hooks and a glib humour as opposed to more traditional notions of pop star cool (see also *They Might Be Giants*, *Beautiful South* and others).

Now, with the success of their single, *One Week*, they seem to have struck a chord in Britain at last, and their fourth album, *Swut*, will doubtless appeal to those with a penchant for hyperactive pop choruses harnessed to lyrics that betray a discordantly bleak and misanthropic world view.

"If I had a gun there'd be no tomorrow" runs the jaunty *I'll Be That Girl*. Thank goodness, like most of the album, it plays better than it reads.

DAVID SINCLAIR

NME THIS WEEK:

HAPPY MONDAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 (3) | I've Been Expecting You | Robbie Williams (Chrysalis) |
| 2 (1) | You've Come a Long Way, Baby | Fatboy Slim (Sire) |
| 3 (2) | Talk on Corners | Corn (Atlantic) |
| 4 (5) | The Life of a Pirate | Lauryn Hill (Columbia) |
| 5 (6) | Step One | Steps (Jive) |
| 6 (7) | Ladies & Gentlemen - the Best of | George Michael (Epic) |
| 7 (8) | Forgiveness, not Forgiveness | Corn (Atlantic) |
| 8 (4) | No Safe | Blondie (RCA/Reprise) |
| 9 (2) | Love Songs | Dr Hook (EMI) |
| 10 (13) | Life Then a Loss | Robbie Williams (Chrysalis) |

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● Figure in brackets indicates last week's position

HMV recommends classical

<p>BACH: ENGLISH SUITES NOS. 2, 4 & 5 MURRAY PERAHIA</p>	<p>HANDEL: SOLOMON ANDREAS SCHOLL PAUL MCCREESH</p>	<p>PUCCHINI: IL TRITTICO FEATURING ROBERTO ALAGNA, ANGELA GHEORGHIU & ANTONIO PAPPANO</p>
<p>BRAMS: VIOLIN CONCERTO VIOLIN SONATA NO. 3 VENEROV & BARENBOIM</p>	<p>SHOSTAKOVICH: THE FILM ALBUM RICCARDO CHAILLY ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA</p>	<p>SIMPLY BAROQUE YO-YO MA</p>

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tender

Lessons of the past for BBC's future

The appointment of the committee chaired by Gavin Davies to consider the future of the licence fee is doubly significant. It marks the sixth time in 50 years that a committee of inquiry has been set up to help shape British broadcasting. Davies, chief international economist of Goldman Sachs, follows in the footsteps of Beveridge (who was appointed in 1949 and reported in 1951), Pilkington (1962), Annan (1977), Hunt (1982) and Peacock (1986).

If the gap since Peacock is not quite the longest in this sequence, it should be noted that Annan was originally appointed in 1970 and had to wait for Labour to return to office in 1974 before he was allowed to resume his work. The revival of the inquiry mechanism by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, is both timely and welcome.

Each of those five reports heralded major changes in British broadcasting. Beveridge led — indirectly — to the launch of ITV in 1955, Pilkington to the launch of BBC2 in 1964 and Annan to the launch of Channel 4 in 1982. It was Hunt's recommendations that released cable TV from being simply an alternative method of receiving terrestrial channels. And, of course, it was Peacock who opened the way for the auction of ITV licences, the separate selling of Channel 4's airtime and the emergence of the independent production industry.

Peacock interpreted his terms of reference well beyond the immediate issues that he had been asked to address, of whether there were viable alternatives to the licence fee and what impact their introduction would have. His revolutionary report took him just a year to produce, from first meeting to last. Davies has six months — the same as Lord Hunt — and it will be fascinating to see how far he follows Peacock's precedent, given the superficial similarities in their terms

The Davies committee must have a vision for Auntie's destiny, says David Elstein, chief executive of Channel 5

of reference. Those who assume his report will automatically adopt his previously published views should remember that the Peacock Committee was dominated by exponents of the free market, but rejected advertising and sponsorship as replacements for the licence fee, preferring subscription, but only in the long term.

The other key significance of the Davies inquiry is that it takes the licence fee out of contention. It is safe until at least 2006, and probably beyond — even the most enthusiastic supporter of subscription knows it cannot play a substantial role until the vast majority of TV sets have converted to digital. By

the time Sir John Birt's successor takes office, Davies will have reported and the Government will have decided the future funding of the BBC well into the next decade — the first time that a Labour administration will have been responsible for such a fundamental structural decision based on a committee of inquiry's recommendations.

With the funding question off the agenda, the key question facing Birt's successor will be how the BBC operates as a public sector broadcaster in a competitive commercial world: by 2006, there could well be 12 million multi-channel homes. The scope and limitations of the market, the nature of the public interest and the role of public service broadcasting in the modern age, the interface between the public broadcaster and the commercial world, the challenge of digital, the need for accountability, the task of delivering and demonstrating value for money — all these must be fully understood by any new Director-General.

Equally important will be a deep knowledge of the creative process, reinvigorating creative morale, a strong sense of the BBC's unique heritage and an ability to recapture the trust and affection of the licence payers who have enabled the BBC to become what it is — the most respected public broadcaster in the world and the most important cultural institution in Britain.

The Davies report and the new Director-General must have a vision of the future that will serve the BBC for decades, not just till 2006. The Hunt and Peacock reports of the 1980s seemed to mark the end of the old, closely regulated system of broadcasting that persisted for more than 60 years.

The effective end of spectrum scarcity — with the growth of cable, satellite and now digital — undermined an entire rationale of carefully controlled expansion that culminated in the creation of a Channel 4 designed to serve a supplementary, rather than a directly competitive, role in UK broadcasting.

Governments and regulators concentrated more on laying down the rules of the game than on defining the shape of the pitch.

● The author will deliver six lectures on the political structure of post-war British broadcasting to the Oxford University English faculty as the 1999 News International Visiting Professor in Broadcast Media. The lectures will be on February 23 and 25 and March 2, 4, 9 and 11.

'We won't shoot you. They may'

Raymond Snoddy previews Peter Taylor's TV series on Ulster loyalists

The senior Provisional IRA man slipped his tea in the Andersonstown Community Centre and asked the television journalist Peter Taylor what his next project was after *Provos*, his illuminating study of the republican paramilitaries. Taylor, who has been going to Northern Ireland for more than 25 years, said he was going to try to do the loyalists next. "He smiled," says Taylor, "and said 'Be careful. We wouldn't shoot you, but they would.'"

Taylor does not know to what extent the IRA man was joking, but the reaction was an indication of the likely difficulties, if not dangers, of persuading the Protestant paramilitaries to talk to the camera about what they had done and why they felt compelled to do it.

the media interview

The loyalist side has largely been untold because most journalists didn't want to tell it and, more importantly, the community and paramilitaries have not wanted to tell it. They have been deeply suspicious of journalists, particularly the BBC," says Taylor, a contract journalist employed by the Corporation.

Curiously enough, making *Provos* helped Taylor to get close to the loyalist paramilitaries. "Almost without exception they had seen *Provos*. It was virtually required viewing. These were the people they had been trying to



In *Loyalists* Taylor explores the motives behind the violence. "They set out to kill Catholics to put pressure on the IRA"

kill them." After many meetings, Taylor and his producer, Sam Collyns, met a dozen members and leaders of the Ulster Volunteer Force in an upstairs room on Belfast's Shankill Road. The conversation continued nearby over fish and chips as loyalists chatted in a matter-of-fact manner about killing people, bombing places and shooting up pubs in what they saw as their war against the IRA. Taylor explained to them that this would be no public relations exercise but awarts-and-all portrait. They would be asked about whom they had killed. There would be no masks or shadows. They would have to face the camera and be named. One of the most horrific stories Taylor tells concerns Billy Giles from East Belfast. In retaliation for an IRA murder of a Sunday school teacher, he shot a young Roman Catholic workman, who had been in his home, simply because he was the most available target.

Taylor met Giles in the Maze Prison, where he was serving a life sentence, kept in touch as he completed an Open University degree, and then on his release helped with the rehabilitation of other loyalist prisoners. But last September Giles ended it all. One night he sat down, wrote a moving testament and then hanged himself, unable to live with the memory of what he had done.

Another ordinary-looking man, who could be anybody's neighbour, tells how he was ordered to kill a Catholic, an IRA member, after an IRA bomb killed six Protestant pensioners in Coleraine. Jim Light was sentenced for shooting a 17-year-old student just because he was a Catholic in the wrong place at the wrong time. Taylor asks Light in the film if he hesitated before pulling the trigger. "No hesitation," Light replies.

One of Taylor's recent tasks has been to telephone the relatives of victims, such as the mother of the dead student, to warn them what will be on the screen when *Loyalists* begins on Sunday. Key loyalist politicians are also interviewed, including Bill Craig, the former Unionist minister, unrepentant about his hard line when the Troubles reignited. The Rev Ian Paisley, and David Trimble, the leader of the North-

Populism rules OK!

CLAWS ARE being sharpened among celebrity gossip magazines as the long dominance of *Hello!* comes under threat from the burgeoning *OK!* Latest ABC circulation figures, reported in *Press Gazette*, show that *Hello!* suffered a year-on-year fall of 11.1 per cent in the second half of last year, down to 510,552, while *OK!* was up by a massive 76.9 per cent to 400,701. Martin Townsend, *OK!*'s Editor, says the gap is narrowing because his populist choice of celebrities is more relevant to readers than *Hello!*'s unrecognisable aristocrats. Overall, the ABC figures were bad news for publishers with sales declining in most sectors, including magazines for women, teenagers and football fans.

■ ITVS QUIZ show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* has been so successful that the network is upping the asking price to potential sponsors when it returns on March 8, says *Marketing*. The first two series were sponsored by *The Sun* for £1 million but the newspaper is unwilling to pay more and ITV is searching for a new sponsor. The last series attracted an average of 12 million viewers, with one edition going up to 17 million.

■ TALK RADIO's chairman, Kelvin MacKenzie, has asked the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, to press the European Broadcasting Union to let Talk become a member. Broadcast reports that Talk wants to compete with BBC Radio 5 Live in covering the Euro 2000 football tournament and the Sydney Olympics but the EBU controls the radio rights and will only grant them to members. MacKenzie says this is anti-competitive and anti-commercial.

■ PROSPECTS for the long-delayed relaunch of the *Mirror* Group's *Sporting Life* now look rosier, says *Press Gazette*.

TRADE

New market research by the group suggests that the paper, repositioned to cover sports and leisure, could sell around 220,000 a day, compared with the 150,000 originally projected. A decision whether to go ahead will be made next month.

■ THE INSURANCE company Commercial & General Union will sponsor the new one-day county cricket league, according to *Marketing Week*. The league replaces the Sunday competition formerly sponsored by AXA. Meanwhile *Marketing* reports that Guinness will sponsor ITV's coverage of the Rugby World Cup in October.

■ CHANGING FACES: Elsa McAlonan, acting editor of *Marie Claire*, to replace Marcelle D'Arvy Smith as Editor of *Woman's Journal*; Phil Hilton from *Men's Health* to edit *Later*, a men's magazine soon to be launched by IPC (Press Gazette); Bill Thompson, former head of art at J. Walter Thompson, to be senior art director at McCann-Erickson (Campaign); Jane Scott from GJW agency to head corporate affairs in Scotland for Boots; Clare Harbord from Eagle Star to be a director of PR agency Countrywide Porter Novelli (PR Week).

John Bishop, Carlton TV's head of entertainment and comedy, to quit the company; Heather Rabbatts, chief executive of Lambeth council, to be a governor of the BBC (Broadcast); Vanessa Griffiths, marketing manager for BBC Radio 4, becomes head of marketing for network radio; Linda Pigott quits as managing director of marketing agency Evans Hunt Scott after only eight months (Marketing).

■ GETTING THE BUSINESS: Somerfield and Kwik Save supermarkets pick Leo Burnett for £14 million ad account; low-calorie lager Bud Light to be launched in Britain with £4.2 million press and post-campaign by BMP DDB; Universal McCann spearheads £1 million campaign for Gonzalez Byass to improve the image of sherry (Marketing); IPC Magazines splits £10 million media budget between Media.com TMB and Walker Media (Media Week); Esso to overhaul European advertising and marketing, currently handled by McCann-Erickson; Airtrons reviews its media arrangements, now with Media Principles; Evans Hunt Scott to handle relaunch of financial services provider M & G Young & Rubicam win £60 million global account for Barilla foods (Campaign).

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

Tabloids smirk as BBC squirms over 'fake' guests

BBC chiefs have only themselves to blame for the Vanessa fiasco

It is hard not to feel a twinge of sympathy for Vanessa Feltz, the glamorous BBC talk-show host who woke up one morning to find she was playing the lead role in one of the most ridiculous farces in BBC history.

The studio "guests" who appeared on *The Vanessa Show* to share their harrowing stories of obesity and sex addiction turned out to be a motley collection of bit-actors and comen who had been supplied by an agent and were willing to talk any old rubbish to get three minutes of glory on daytime TV.

That revelation by *The Mirror* has caused a public confidence crisis for our state broadcaster which will not abate for some time. Every national newspaper and even the BBC's own *Newsnight* have followed the story, calling for heads to roll. Alan Yentob, Director of BBC Television, is personally overseeing an internal inquiry into the fiasco which has already resulted in the suspension of two producers and a researcher from the show. Feltz, who was ignorant of the scam and proclaims herself "horrified", is agast at the vehemence of press reaction. Dozens of pages have been devoted to the story, ridiculing the BBC and demanding that her "trailer trash" show be scrapped.

Sources say she feels it is a "personal witch-hunt" but Feltz is in fact irrelevant. Why the press has reported the debacle with so much glee has little to do with her and more to do with a longstanding grudge against "high and mighty" television. Papers such as *The Mirror* have seethed in silence for years as television has used the word "tabloid" as a handy label for anything that is deemed seedy or tawdry.

Editors have fumed as television curled its lip at their salacious stories but adopted the lofty approach of pointing to "press intrusion" while running all the gory details anyway. (This charge could also be levelled at some broadsheet newspapers.) That it has been the thoroughness of tabloid reporting which has exposed allegedly shabby standards at the BBC is being regarded by the Mirror Group as the most delicious of ironies. Even more gratifying for *The Mirror* is the fact that the BBC is asking for co-operation in its inquiry, a request which has so far been refused. Piers Morgan, Editor of *The*



Vanessa Feltz



Vanessa Feltz feels she is the victim of a media witch-hunt

● Raymond Snoddy is away

Do we care about the truth?

Our fears over genetically modified foods have been fuelled by a media frenzy and inaccurate reporting, says Science Editor Nigel Hawkes

The scare over genetically modified food has been a classic example of a little-studied phenomenon, the media feeding frenzy. From small starts, frenzies quickly develop a terrible momentum. Sense and judgment are the first casualties: public understanding the final victim. For as long as it lasts, readers and viewers are buried in a blizzard of stories that compete to paint apocalyptic visions of horrors to come. Politicians shamelessly join in. Then, like a tap being turned off, it stops.

Absolutely the finest example in my experience was the flesh-eating bug which transfixed the press in the summer of 1994. This was a strain of *Streptococcus* capable of killing those unlucky enough to be infected with it.

There was nothing new about the organism or the symptoms it caused, which had been beautifully described in a surgical journal by a doctor working in Shanghai as long ago as 1919. Nor was there any real evidence of an epidemic, or even a significant increase in the number of cases. Yet for a week or two the flesh-eating bug made huge headlines. Then it was gone — and hardly a word has appeared on the subject since.

The GM-food frenzy was triggered by a two-page spread in *The Guardian* on February 12, claiming that tests on GM potatoes had damaged rats which had eaten them. Curiously, an almost identical article which had appeared in *The Mail on Sunday* at the end of January had passed unnoticed.

The *Guardian* article, despite its length, did not address two key issues: that the GM potatoes tested were not intended as

human food, and would never have passed muster as such; and that the gene inserted into them was for a toxin. Small wonder, perhaps, that they might have had damaging effects on the rats, though whether they actually did is still in dispute. By all normal journalistic standards, the story was holed below the waterline.

But it made no difference. The controversy quickly took wing, sprouting subplots and generating a tremendous row more or less about nothing. As it happens, GM foods have been better monitored and controlled in Britain than anywhere else in the world. Small trial plots are all that have been planted. No ill-effects to health have been observed, nor are they likely. Possible environmental effects are being carefully monitored. Is this the impression left by the row? I think not.

Frenzies are caused partly by bad reporting, but could only happen in an environment ripe for them. We live in a society in-

creasingly anxious about risks, real and imaginary, as the sociologist Frank Furedi has pointed out in his book *The Culture of Fear*. He cites a study of the medical literature which showed that in the five-year period between 1967 and 1972, about 1,000 articles containing the word risk were published. In the period between 1986 and 1991, there were 80,000 such articles.

Had risks increased eightfold in such a short time? Clearly not. We live in a far less risky time than our parents or grandparents. Today fewer than one woman in 10,000 dies in childbirth; in 1940, one in 300 did. The disappearance of the Soviet Union is the greatest risk reduction in our lifetimes: but better drugs, a more plentiful diet, social securi-



A protester objecting to the planting of genetically modified oil seed rape. "Frenzies quickly develop a terrible momentum."

ty and other changes have also cut the ordinary risks of life.

What has changed is attitude to risk. At a time when most risks are actually declining, people are worrying more. But they lack the skill to assess risks, to develop a true calculus of risk in which real dangers are distinguished from mere scares. Driving a car is far more dangerous than flying, but we seldom hear of people with driving-phobia.

The second reason comes closer to home for journalists. It

sounds pompous to say so, but today's journalists are not much interested in the truth. As the American academic Peter Sandman of Rutgers University in New York puts it: "In the epistemology of routine journalism, there is no truth, or at least no way to determine truth. There are only conflicting claims, to be covered as fairly as possible."

So journalists feel they have done their job if they quote both sides of an argument, "tossing the hot potato of truth into the lap

of the audience", as Sandman says. This approach has the effect of giving all sources equal value, of making the most outrageous claims seem credible — and a lot more interesting — than the sober responses elicited from official sources.

Nobody would want to deny a hearing to those opposed to GM foods, but crying wolf is seldom sensible, unless a wolf is truly at the door. If one believed all the scares floated by environmentalists and health campaigners, one

would never set foot out of doors, though, of course, that would still leave one the option of falling down stairs.

Newspapers that join in a feeding frenzy put their reputations at risk and earn the contempt of readers who know about the subject. Worse, they help to create an atmosphere of fear which could threaten the forces which have made life less risky in the past century. Fortunately, I suspect that most readers treat frenzies with the disdain they deserve.

A sense of style for our Times

Why good English still matters to a few of us

A study of the style books used by sub-editors of *The Times* in the past 50 years shows that some injunctions never change. One is over the use of that very overworked word "very".

"Very" — there was a time when "very" was not allowed in *The Times* and it would be a good rule to restore. "Very" hardly ever strengthens an adjective and often exaggerates. A very cold wind is in all probability only a cold wind; not Arctic. We might save two or three columns yearly by excluding "very". But in giving up "very" we must not turn to "most" or "highly" or similar words by way of compensation.

That was written by the Editor, William Haley, in *The Times Style Book* of 1953.

"Very" — its constant use inflates language without strengthening its meaning," said the style book of 1992. "Always delete 'very' and then see if it is really needed. That said, do not strip your writing of all idiom. 'She seems very English to me.' 'Nice? Not very.' The injunction remains in *The Times Guide to English Style and Usage*, compiled by Tim Austin and published as a book this week, though it is put more briefly: "Very — one of the most overworked words in English. Always try to omit."

Apart from writing more concisely, contemporary editors are less authoritarian. The style guide is precisely that — a guide not a straitjacket, says Peter Stothard, the Editor. Some spellings or constructions are a matter of choice; the rejected usages are not necessarily wrong. Stothard rules for a different audience in a different age: the public school elite of 50 years ago. Sport, TV, music did not matter so much to Haley whose audience was also older. Rules of grammar and spelling must still be prescribed, he says, but what is correct English for William Rees-Mogg or a leader writer will be different for sport or music columnists. Haley devoted

250 words to the termination use or ice, arguing that it should be preserved in its proper place. Both *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* now opt for ice in the space of one or two lines. Younger readers, many not taught English grammar, may wonder why fuddy-duddy editors still worry about style. They hear the English language spoken carelessly on radio and their parents swearing like troopers; and, as Keith Waterhouse has noted, bad language is the authentic English of the moment.

So why should newspapers bother? One reason is that with 30 million readers a day newspapers remain the guardians of the style and usage of the world's main common language. Another is that readers who do know the rules are intensely irritated by sloppy spelling and punctuation. A house style, as *The Daily Telegraph Style Book* puts it, provides conformity and instils the newspaper with individuality. All newspapers share its ambitions for accuracy, immediacy, clarity and readability.

Both *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* remain prescriptive about clichés. Among those which *The Times* resists are backslang, blueprint, bombshell, chaos, clumpdown, consensus, crackdown, major, mega-, nightmare and shock and situation. *The Daily Telegraph* singles out "partner" for special odium: "Use girlfriend, boyfriend, companion, lover, mistress, concubine, friend or any other apposite word." It also bans prior to, bubbly, gunned down, blasted, mystic callers, perverted Scout leaders, frail grannies, disgraced managers, and innocent victims.

Style is one matter, taste another. One area where newspapers, particularly the tabloids, have deliberately lagged behind popular convention is over the use of four-letter words. At *The Times* and *Telegraph*, use of the F word always has to be referred upwards. At *The Times* it is allowed infrequently and only within quotations; otherwise it becomes Fm. None of the tabloids uses either the F or C words, though other obscenities are allowed with asterisks.

But what editors are prepared to print is undoubtedly changing, especially on arts pages. As Waterhouse noted in the *British Journalism Review*, some broadsheets — he singled out *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* — now have the vocabulary of Billingsgate porters.

● *The Guide* can be ordered from *The Times Bookshop* (0900-134459) for £9.99.



How Brown self-destructed

Carol Midgley on the rise and fall of the original lad

One year ago James Brown, the original lad, announced his drink and drugs days were over and that he had finally grown up. Becoming Editor of *GQ*, he said, felt like coming home. Condé Nast was the best company he had ever worked for and he had "never been happier".

Yesterday, however, the love affair was in ruins. A strangely worded statement from Condé Nast said Brown had resigned by mutual consent over "philosophical differences" about the magazine's content.

What it really meant was that Nicholas Coleridge, managing director of the company, was incensed by the latest issue of *GQ* in which Brown listed the Nazis and Field Marshal Rommel in a roll call of the "sharpest men of the 20th century".

Rommel, who led the Nazi campaign in North Africa, is pictured in the uniform that Hitler chose for him, alongside Charles Laughton and Sammy Davis Jr in the bracket of men who showed "style in the face of true adversity".

Predictably, the article caused a storm of protest from Jewish groups, which insist that it was seen to damage the respectable image of the *Gentleman's Quarterly*.

His case was not helped by a series of semi-pornographic photographs in the same issue, one featuring a naked woman apparently stabbed and tied up in a blood-filled bath.

Condé Nast insiders said the general feeling was that Brown had overstepped the mark, naively believing that he was invincible.

Other colleagues who have known him longer, however, said it was only a matter of time before he pressed the "explode" button that has characterised both his genius and his capacity for destruction.



The *GQ* issue that went too far

Brown has now enjoyed years as the darling of the men's magazine market after creating *Loaded* and a previously non-existent market in laddism.

Within three years he had tripled *Loaded*'s circulation to around the half-million mark with a unashamed diet of sport, booze and booze talk, and celebrated in style with well-documented drink and cocaine binges, earning the reputation of a bully editor.

Imitators such as *FHM* and *Maxim* were soon spawned, selling more than

established women's glossies such as *Elle* and *Cosmopolitan*.

But it was when Brown was invited to reverse the fortunes of the ailing *GQ* that he cleaned up his act, went teetotal and declared that *Loaded* and *FHM* were for kids, not him.

He began wearing Savile Row suits and married his girlfriend, Caz, while setting up a magazine about his beloved Leeds United football team.

But although he managed to halt the sales of the decline, *GQ* did not pile on the sales that Condé Nast had hoped for. Most recent figures show it was selling 130,152 — way below its peak of 148,000.

Condé Nast apparently thought it was being brought too downmarket. Brown argued that he was making it cool and contemporary.

The statement from Nicholas Coleridge read: "During James's editorship the magazine's circulation has grown and he brought energy and humour to the editorial mix. He is a talented editor. We like him. Unfortunately, philosophical differences have arisen between James and Condé Nast over some aspects of the magazine's content. We have agreed to disagree."

A new editor is now being sought. Early names in the frame are Simon Hills and Dylan Jones.

Brown's statement added simply: "I have enjoyed my 18 months at *GQ*. The team and I have built a dynamic, modern men's magazine. It has been a great project and I'm looking forward to my next challenge."

Yesterday Brown spent the day with his lawyers. It is thought that since he secured a water-tight contract when he joined in 1997, he will receive a substantial pay-off.



James Brown revelling in his role last year as Editor of *GQ*

Fleet Street tussles to tell a tale of Alastair Campbell

DON'T shoot the messenger, write a book about him. Three hopeful scribes are now lining up to pen a biography of Alastair Campbell, the Downing Street cheerleader. Peter Osborne, *The Express* columnist, has a start in that he has actually signed a contract with Aurum Press. He expects his "unauthorised" work ("Alastair told me to bugger off," he admits) to be ready in time for the party conferences.

Eric Jacobs, biographer and drinking chum of the late Kingsley Amis, hopes to sign a contract soon, but awaits a reply to his letter to Campbell — a colleague on Eddy Shah's *Today* in 1986 — seeking his view on the project.

Contender number three is Anne McElvoy, of *The Inde-*

pendent, who plans a book on new Labour but concedes that she might shift its focus to Campbell. She and Jacobs hope to persuade him to co-operate, to balance any evil insinuations from the right-wing Osborne, but the precedent is discouraging. Peter Mandelson gave Donald Macintyre a hand, to try to soften the impact of Paul Rountledge's biography, but in vain: he has had to resign and the Macintyre tome has yet to appear.

■ I WISH the *Express* newspapers would stop fidgeting. This week the old *Sunday Express*, after 18 months as the spanking new *The Express on Sunday*, went back to calling itself the *Sunday Express*, shedding readers with each new skin. Summoned to



explain this on BBC radio last Sunday, Michael Pilgrim, its executive editor, was asked why his paper (circulation 1,009,683) does so much worse than *The Mail on Sunday* (2,291,247).

"*The Mail on Sunday*," he smiled, "is full of hatred and revengefulness." Unlike the *Sunday Express*, so dripping with sweetness that Peter Osborne (see above) described Tony Blair this week as "morally repugnant and utterly

damnable", while fellow-columnist Ann Widdecombe wondered if Dr Howard Stoute was "too daft to be an MP".

■ GARDENERS know how important breeding is, so the *Independent on Sunday* is right to go for reliable stock in its choice of a new gardening correspondent. She is Sarah Raven, who used to write feelingly about flower arranging for *The Daily Telegraph*. Her

husband, Adam Nicolson, is not only the grandson of Vita Sackville-West, creator of the famous garden at Sissinghurst, but the brother of Rebecca Nicolson, deputy editor of the *Independent on Sunday*. So that's what is meant by a family newspaper.

■ AS head of ITV's daytime programming, Dianne Nelms has been in the thick of the row over fake guests on *Trisha*, so she thought to relax last Sunday by taking her husband to the charity performance of *The Vagina Monologues* at the Old Vic.

On the way out she was accosted by a young man who said that he was from *The Express*, seeking her reaction to the indecencies on stage. When she demurred he as-

sured her: "It's all right, you can use a false name if you like." No mention of a £100 fee, though.

■ MY only appearance on *Kilroy* was on April Fool's Day three years ago, when the subject was hoaxes. I had written an article denouncing the japes played on readers and television viewers on April 1, so my role on the show was to be the spoilsport. I did it so well that I was booed by the other guests, who told stories of incredible hoaxes that they had perpetrated or suffered. Inevitably, the producers inserted their own joke — a Eurocrat talking about a Brussels initiative to standardise humour — but he was more credible than the allegedly real people.



Biography target: Alastair Campbell with Tony Blair

Selling a dream

We are endlessly fascinated with other people's homes, says Grace Bradberry

There are days when I stand amid the falling masonry, exposed pipe-work and peeling paint of my new flat, and wonder if this might just represent "shabby chic". In my heart I know that even with the lights off and the walls glimpsed only by street lamp there is no way that this phrase, coined by Min Hogg to characterise the style of *World of Interiors* (which she edits), can be applied to my little pit in North London. But that is the point of interiors magazines — you can always dream.

We have become a nation of dreamers when it comes to our homes. Just look at the statistics for what is known as the "home interest" magazine market. Since 1989, the total circulation of all such titles in Britain has grown by 84 per cent. We now buy 2.5 million a month. Our appetite for pictures of other people's homes, with suitably revealing text, seems insatiable. Few of these magazines are entirely unpalatable. Nevertheless, some taste better than others, and *World of Interiors* is a truffle among the mushrooms.

With a circulation of 70,128, it is by no means a big seller (*House & Garden*, also part of the Condé Nast stable, sells 163,313). Yet the latest ABC circulation figures show that sales have risen year on year — by half a per cent — and this at a time when we seem to be on the brink of recession. Launched as *Interiors* in 1981, it is the child of Min Hogg, still its Editor. But the man instrumental in its commercial success is Tony Willett, who joined in 1982 and became its publisher in 1989. Having started as a sales-

man, Willett has done a great job of flogging this rather rarefied magazine to advertisers and the public. While Min Hogg's own home has featured in the magazine, Willett would never dream of putting his own forward. He lives in a mock-Tudor house in a leafy Surrey street leading down to fields. Mock Tudor has a bad name, but this was its acceptable face, a beautiful light, 1920s house, with elegant windows and attractive woodwork. It is surrounded by a large garden, in which Willett and his wife, Ann, a journalist, have built their own gazebo.

They have also rag-rolled the bedroom walls, papered the dining room a deep red, and filled the house with luxurious textiles. It is not, though, the sort of house to appear in *World of Interiors*, where the ethos is of rooms with "the edges knocked off them", as he puts it.

World of Interiors is not really a showcase for the world of leading interior designers. It is more about one-off properties touched by personal taste and idiosyncrasy. I had assumed that men of Willett's age (he is 54) were probably the target market, and that my friends and I merely said voyeur. Not so. "The main age group is 20 to 44-year-olds, weighed to 20 to 34-year-olds," he says.

His own theory for this is: "There's a time when you grow out of experimentation, minimalism, having nothing to sit on, sleeping standing up. By middle age you should have decided what you want to do. And the older one gets, the more traditional one becomes." In *World of Interiors*, fading gran-



Tony Willett, publisher of *World of Interiors*, at home. He has taken a rarefied magazine to the masses

deur is more the magazine's style. The homes of pop stars and actresses rarely feature. There were rumours that Min Hogg had turned down Meg and Noel Gallagher's opulent pad, though Willett claims ignorance of this. He does admit: "We come across so many houses that are ghastly. They have had millions of pounds spent on them and they look dreadful."

Yet you would need if not millions, then several hundred thou-

sand to buy most of the properties featured in the magazine. Even so, it is, apparently, more accessible than it was.

"In the early days it was like a Lamborghini — so rarefied that few people even aspired to it," says Willett. "Now it has retained that up-market style while being approachable and inspirational."

In addition to the succulent interiors there are merchandising features, and this is where the access-

bility comes in. "You'll find fabric there from £3 a metre up to £300 — in the old days it was more the equivalent of £150 up."

Willett wonders where it will all end. "The home interest market has grown to such an extent that it's almost inconceivable that there could be more magazine launches in 1999 — yet I know there are. Whether the industry can go on supporting even more home interest magazines, I don't know."

The year of living Monica

Reporters addicted to the scandal are now bereft, says Ian Brodie

Suddenly Washington is fresh out of scandal. The awful realisation is dawning on legions of journalists in the American capital that the biggest political soap opera of their careers is over.

At first there was a sense of relief when President Clinton was acquitted of impeachment charges by the Senate last Friday. As senators raced to the airport for flights home, journalists adjourned to Capitol Hill watering holes to celebrate their escape from the grueling demands of the year-long airing of laundry. Promises were made to return to the normal pattern of life before Monica Lewinsky intruded. Faltering relationships would be repaired, children would be taken to soccer games. Everyone could at last take it easy. Then the reality of life after Monica began to sink in.

What could one do that would be so intriguing, challenging, competitive and shot through with sexual high jinks in the White House? Somehow, plans for saving pensions or cutting taxes would lack the compulsive fascination of presidential perjury over a "certain kind of sex", as the more fastidious papers and networks initially called oral sex. Maybe a war would help. Careers were made and others faltered during the Year of Living Monica. Talk shows on cable television regularly devoted themselves to Monica all evening. Chris Matthews on CNN's *Hardball* out-shouted the rest. His colleague Geraldo Rivera remained steadfastly pro-Clinton and is seeking an exclusive interview as his reward.

Two legal analysts on CNN, Greta Van Susteren and Roger Cossack, kept their heads amid the hubbub and drew the distinction between allegations and

findings of guilt on their programme *Burden of Proof*.

There was a rash of Clinton-baiting blondes, led by Laura Ingraham on MSNBC, who discussed testicles and other appendages with a candour seldom heard on daytime television. Matt Drudge made his name by peddling Sengate gossip on his swamp-dwelling website. What can he do for an encore? At least Chief Justice William Rehnquist has his day job back at the Supreme Court. He will be remembered for the gold rings on the sleeves of his robe, an addition he made after admiring the costume worn by the Lord Chancellor in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. ("It's a good thing he didn't see *La Cage aux Folles*," quipped Mark Russell, a Washington satirist.)

The Sunday network chat shows feasted on Monica week after week. Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, appeared on at least one of the programmes for ten weeks in a row. His achievement was overshadowed by William Ginsburg, Monica's first lawyer, who was on all five shows in one day, a record that may stand for ever. One fifth of the Senate, 20 members in all, were chat-show guests on the final Sunday before Mr Clinton's acquittal.

Print reporters filled acres of newspaper in hopes of becoming the new Woodward and Bernstein of Watergate fame. But there were too many leaks and too much competition for lone stars to shine. So, goodbye saturation coverage.

To be sure, there may be new legal grenades from Kenneth Starr. But unless either of the Clintons is put in legal jeopardy, the big headlines are over.

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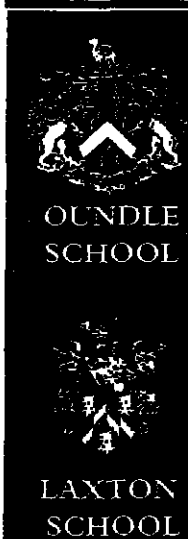
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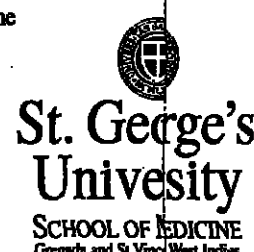
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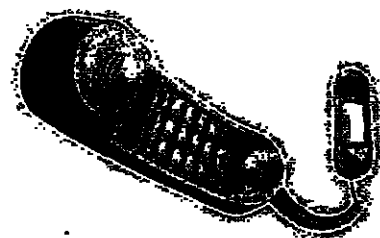
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THE TIMES
EDUCATION

Choosing a perfect school

Good primary education does not depend solely on results, says

Fred Redwood

Parents who are choosing a primary school for their children will be particularly interested in the national test results to be published in *The Times* on Tuesday. The tables are easy to understand: just keep Level 4 in mind as the expected level for children of 11. However, it would be unwise for parents to opt automatically for the school with the highest percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or above. At the primary stage, children often learn as many basic skills at home as they do at school. Consequently, a school with excellent results in literacy, for example, may harbour some uninspiring teachers nonetheless.

It should also be noted that there has been much criticism of results at the higher key stages: it is quite likely that Tuesday's results will reveal similar anomalies.

So how should parents go about finding a good primary school? A fundamental rule is to visit each school during a normal working day.

Most schools now hold open evenings, which feature displays of work by their pupils. Attending these functions may be interesting but such staged events should be treated with the scepticism with which you would approach any other promotional activity.

To gain a realistic picture of a school's strengths and weaknesses you need to witness normal lessons. Go about arranging a date but remember, on the day, to consider how much status is being afforded your visit. Be wary if you are rushed through the school in half an hour with time only for a cursory glance at lessons in progress.

Be aware of the learning environment. Children work better in pleasant surroundings and they receive encouragement when they see their work displayed on the walls. Ask about the layout of each classroom. Are there helpful signposts indicating where everything is kept? There should be.

Do not, however, assume that colourful collages are the sole indication of a talented



Five-year-olds Cathie Blackman, left, and Kishma Crabbe in a reception class at Wandale Primary School in Wandsworth, South London

teacher — a far better pointer is the general atmosphere during lessons.

Parents should consider whether the teacher is clearly in charge, even if groups of students are working on their own initiative. That doesn't mean the teacher should be a Joyce Grenfell soundalike — quiet teachers are often the best — but effective primary school teaching depends on being able to keep firm control of the class. Satisfy yourself that this is taking place.

Talk to the children about their work. Ask them what they are doing, why they are doing it and what they ultimately hope to achieve. Children respond to challenges so the teacher should have set every child a target at the beginning of each exercise. Alarm bells should start ringing if there are groups of bored children, half-heartedly ploughing through worksheets or projects.

Ask to see a random sample of pupils' work and pay careful attention to the teacher's comments. If they are clear

and helpful in tone then it is fair to assume that the children are being encouraged to do their best. A curt "Level 3, you can do better" means very little and suggests that the teacher may be casual or even uncaring.

Finally, on the subject of written work, note that it is very important that children take pride in the presentation of their work.

Look for storage facilities which keep paper and books uncrumpled and safe. If carefully prepared drawings or writing assignments are dumped on the shelves of a cupboard, then it won't be long before it gets tatty and children lose interest.

Another consideration is the grouping of pupils. Having too few children in each year group makes it impossible for many schools to stream at the primary stage. But this does not mean that grouping by ability is impossible. It is now generally accepted that children should be working at lev-

els appropriate to their ability — and preferably with children of a similar ability to themselves. It's quite likely that the groups will change for different subjects: for art, drama and games, groups may deliberately be made up of mixed-ability pupils.

But do beware of teachers who have a broad policy of grouping the more motivated children with the more disruptive ones. Children go to school to learn, not to act as mentors for classmates with behavioural problems.

Parents often say that they don't know what to ask teachers when they visit a school. That is understandable since education has created such a specialised language. However, a question about Literacy Hour would be pertinent. Most primary schools believe that this innovation was thrust upon them too abruptly, allowing insufficient time to make it effective. This is a fair comment but the good schools have now devised imaginative ways of making the idea work and they see it as a worthwhile

part of the school day. Therefore be wary of the teacher who rants about the utter impossibility of using the Literacy Hour beneficially.

Ask whether the school has a policy on bullying — it should. Under-achieving boys is another important issue and ask what the school does to encourage boys to read.

With daughters in mind, ask if girls are being encouraged in traditionally male-dominated subjects such as information technology. There are differing views on these subjects but the important point is that the teacher you are questioning should be able

to explain the school's stance.

A final piece of advice is to take a step back and imagine your child attending the school in question. Would he or she be stimulated by the teachers and pupils? Are the other children too boisterous? Would the regime be too oppressive or too casual? Would there be sufficient emphasis on arts subjects? Is sport taken seriously? Will there be enough input from information technology experts?

Parents know their children best. Only they will be able to calculate the answers to these questions. It is up to them to judge as they see fit.

Why the Bacc is better than A levels

Ever since A levels were declared the "gold standard" of British education, ministers have tampered with them at their peril. No government wants to be accused of dumbing down, and Labour is particularly sensitive to the charge.

Baroness Blackstone is due to outline the latest proposals to broaden the sixth-form curriculum next month, and already the flak is flying. Winchester College was said this week to be considering switching to the International Baccalaureate (IB) if the move to modular courses went too far.

David Blunkett has guaranteed that a traditionally examined course will be maintained in every A-level subject. But schools such as Winchester

convincing that the new, broader A levels with five subjects in the lower sixth and modules all round are compatible with the maintenance of the gold standard, however, especially if the pass rate keeps on climbing. The IB's many admirers will be hoping that some top schools do react by making the switch from A levels. Although only 34 British schools and colleges offer the Baccalaureate, there are many — and I am one of them — who consider it a better qualification than A levels for an academic sixth form. Students take six subjects, three to a higher level, and are expected to take a course in the theory of knowledge.

Many of the 200 schools that have looked into the possibility of offering the IB have found it too costly in resources and staff time. But the gap with A level will close to some extent when the new system arrives, and schools looking for a challenge in the sixth form may think again.

At present, head teachers and governors worry that parents would be nervous of anything without the A-level stamp of authority. But universities are warming to the IB in recognition of the high standards expected across a broad range of subjects. The addition of a school such as Winchester to the IB fold is just what the qualification needs to take off in Britain.



John O'Leary

Shakespeare's problem

The film about literature's greatest playwright will influence and mislead those studying his work, says Susan Elkin

As students they are fascinated by Gwyneth Paltrow, have heard about the romantic sex and cherish a naive notion that it will boost their Shakespeare revision.

Indeed, the plot of the movie *Shakespeare in Love* is laced with literary allusions: I loved the scene when Will marched into a tavern and demanded "Give me to drink mandragora" after his own Cleopatra. Then there is the sending-up of Zeffirelli ebessies in the ballroom scene of his 1968 film *Romeo and Juliet*. And Tom Stoppard's agility in weaving in dialogue from his *Travesties* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

But what will this slick nonsense do to students' largely literalist, and usually narrowly focused, perceptions? Will Stoppard's version of Shakespeare hit GCSE papers this summer? Or will students of 16 distinguish between the literary romp and what we know of Shakespeare's life and the writing of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* (which is very little)?

Will the chronology mislead them? Of course, Shakespeare did not write *Twelfth Night* immediately after *Romeo and Juliet*, or reinvent his Juliet as Viola, as the film suggests. Most scholars agree that *Romeo and Juliet* (written by a mature man of 30, over halfway through his life, not by a mooping 22-year-old) and *Twelfth Night* were at least five years apart, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Henry IV Parts I and II*, among others, coming in between.

Teachers of English must drum into their students that one goes to Shakespeare for poetry, pleas, action, characterisation, laughter and tears — but not for a factual account of English or Roman history, which, like many a playwright since, he distorts for his own dramatic purposes. The same applies to *Shakespeare in Love*, although teenagers might usefully grasp the point that women were precluded from acting on the Elizabethan stage.

Will students emerge from the cinema with the mistaken idea that Queen Elizabeth actually frequented London's filthy and potentially plague-ridden theatres with the masses? Or that 16th-century



As you like it: Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes in *Shakespeare in Love*

audiences were quietly attentive to the play? Or that a young gentleman would have been unsupervised enough to conduct an affair of the heart (and body) as Viola does in the film?

The trouble is that young audiences are inclined to believe unquestioningly what they are shown. Visual images are so much more powerful than anything said by a teacher or read in a book. From an Eng Lit point of view, *Shakespeare in Love* should probably come with a strong health warning. One way round this prob-

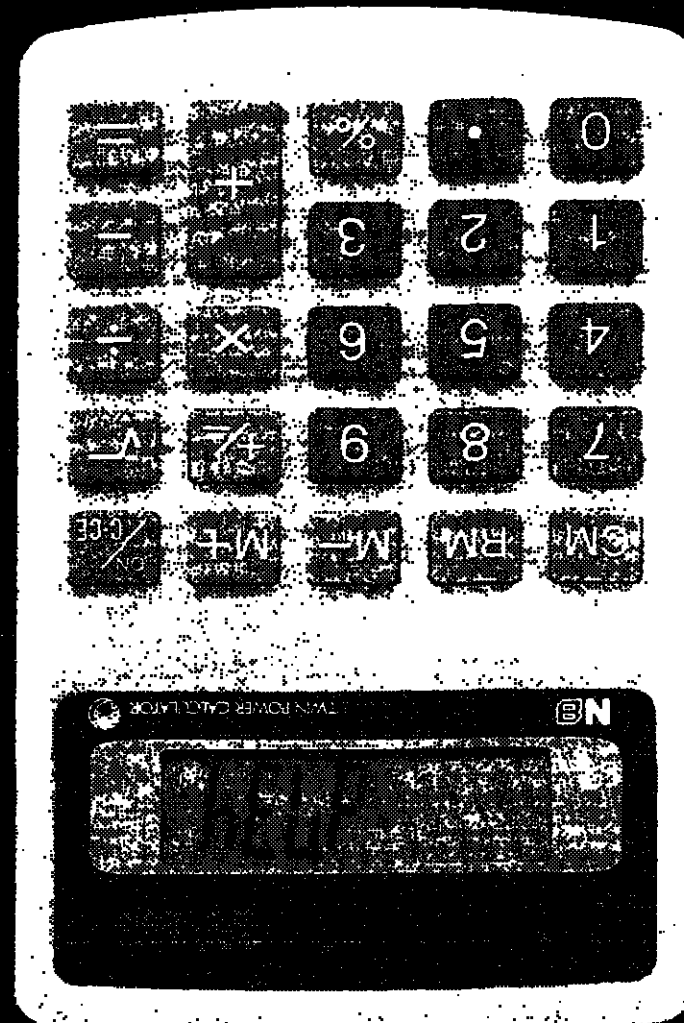
lem, since pupils will be influenced by it anyway, would be for English and Media Studies classes to confront the film head-on by studying it closely, unpicking the humour, the cross-references, the anachronisms and its contemporary relevance.

A GCSE student who had been led to an understanding of how and why such a film succeeds so well as popular entertainment today would be on the way to an educated frame of mind.

● Susan Elkin is a teacher of secondary English.

30p

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MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW



Damon Hill



David Coulthard



Mika Hakkinen



Michael Schumacher



Eddie Irvine

DRIVERS

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01 Mika Hakkinen	07 Eddie Irvine	12 Ralf Schumacher
02 Michael Schumacher	08 Olivier Panis	13 Heinz-Harald Frentzen
03 Damon Hill	09 Giancarlo Fisichella	14 Alexander Wurz
04 David Coulthard	10 Jean Alesi	15 Mika Salo
05 Alessandro Zanardi	11 Johnny Herbert	16 Ricardo Zonta
06 Jacques Villeneuve		17 Marc Gené

GROUP B	
18 Jarno Trulli	19 Rubens Barrichello
20 Pedro Diniz	21 Pedro de la Rosa
22 Norberto Fontana	*Subject to confirmation

CONSTRUCTORS

GROUP C	GROUP D
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Follow the instructions on the line and tap in your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name (maximum 16 characters), together with your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number (please note, you need to speak these details). You will receive a 10-digit PIN as confirmation of your entry. You can enter a team at any time until noon on Thursday, March 4, 1999 to qualify for the start of the Australian Grand Prix.

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For your Fantasy Formula One team to start scoring points at the Australian GP, which takes place in Melbourne on Sunday, March 7, postal entries must be received by first post on Wednesday, March 3, 1999. Entries received after this date will only score points for any remaining grands prix.

THE TIMES NATWEST FANTASY FORMULA ONE ENTRY FORM

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GROUP A AND GROUP B DRIVERS

1st 2nd 3rd

GROUP C AND GROUP D CONSTRUCTORS

Team Name (maximum of 16 characters)

I have read and accept the rules and wish to enter the Fantasy Formula One game.

Signature _____ Date _____

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Vaughan ensures victory for England A

By THRASY PETROPOULOS AND JOHN STERN

THE England A team held the nerve to beat Zimbabwe A by four wickets in the second limited-overs match in Harare yesterday and so ensured victory in the three-match series. The win lacked the drama of Bulawayo, where England won by a single wicket in the last over, but a revised target of 151 in 47 overs was a challenging one nonetheless and, but for a measured innings of 41 not out from Michael Vaughan, the captain, and a plucky contribution from Chris Read, it might have been Zimbabwe celebrating.

Vikram Solanki appeared to be harrying England to victory, but, having reached 29 from 25 balls, he drove loosely at Gary Brent and was bowled. When Paul Franks followed shortly afterwards, 40 runs were still needed with four wickets standing.

Andy Blignaut, whose first eight overs had brought him two wickets for 32 runs, was then recalled, but his next two cost him 24.

The bowlers then put in a disciplined performance to restrict Zimbabwe to 154 with Franks, a latecomer to the tour as replacement for Paul Hutchison, taking four for 34. More impressive, though, was Steve Harrison, who worked up a fine pace and conceded only 13 runs off the bat in ten overs.

Ian Bell, 16, who was close to selection for the Warwickshire first XI towards the end of last summer, made 115 of the England Under-19 team's 272 for seven on the opening day of the third four-day international against New Zealand Under-19 in Alexandria.

Despite a slow outfield, Bell needed only 142 balls for his century. He showed remarkable concentration in an innings flawed only by the timing and manner of his dismissal. With the new ball only one over away, he came down the pitch to Bruce Martin, the left-arm spinner, and was stumped for 115.

Mare Syrington held England together towards the close and was unbeaten 39 after almost three hours.

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CRICKET: SRINATH BRINGS ABOUT DRAMATIC COLLAPSE TO KEEP INDIA IN CONTENTION

Superb Saeed stands alone

FROM RICHARD HOBSON IN CALCUTTA

CALCUTTA (third day of five): India, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 225 runs to beat Pakistan

SAEED ANWAR set himself high goals on his arrival in India by boasting that his primary target for the month ahead was to score a triple-century. While not reaching that landmark yesterday, he might well have produced the single individual performance that will swing the first game of the Asian Test Championship in Pakistan's favour.

From inauspicious beginnings, when his feet seemed to be cast in lead, Saeed steadied himself, expanded his range and finally reached a point where he was the complete master of the India attack. Even Javagal Srinath, who returned the best figures of his Test career — eight for 86 — was powerless to contain the left-hander at the height of his destructive powers.

Had the lower order offered better support than Saeed would surely have recorded a maiden double hundred and Pakistan put the game well beyond the reach of opponents, who, through lack of dynamic leadership, allowed things to drift out of control in the period just before and after tea. Even as it is, the target of 279 will prove

to be a severe challenge with the off spin of Saqlain Mushtaq likely to play a significant role today.

Only once have India scored as many to win in the fourth innings. What Mohammad Azharuddin, the captain, must have thought as he watched Saeed at work is easy to imagine. He dropped the opening batsman on Wednesday evening on two, potentially the most expensive chance to be squandered by an India fielder since Kiran More missed Graham Gooch at Lord's nine years ago. Gooch gave his next chance on 333.

Saeed's unbeaten 188 from 259 balls represented almost 60 per cent of the total of 316. There are few batsmen who could have matched the timing and precision of his cutting backward of square or his driving through mid-wicket. He batted for 454 minutes and hit a six and 23 fours, but, as he returned to a standing ovation from another huge crowd, his features spoke of frustration rather than joy, reflecting his feelings at the lack of support that had been accorded him.

Both here and in the earlier two-match series, the initiative has been squandered time and again, levels of charity being displayed that must be the envy of the Mother Teresa Mission that is less than a mile away.

Srinath and Prasad had been rendered ineffective in the first session, the period in which the pace bowlers wreaked havoc on the first day, but, from 262 for three, at which point Yousuf Youhana was matching Saeed stroke for stroke, Pakistan lost their last seven wickets for 54 runs.

Ambition trumped good sense when Yousuf attempted to hook Srinath and top-edged to long leg after making 56. Shahid Afridi, vulnerable against the short ball, could only balloon the next delivery to David at second slip as he tried to take evasive action and Srinath came within two inches of completing a hat-trick when Salim Malik edged him just short of slip.

To his utter discredit, Ganguly continued to appeal for a catch that he clearly held on the half-volley beyond the point at which it might be excused as a heat of the moment reaction. Although



Saeed, the third Pakistan opener to carry his bat in Test cricket, swings Singh for six

the third umpire adjudicated correctly, this kind of behaviour breeds mistrust between teams who do not have a history of friendship, however successful the last four weeks. As a native Bengali, too, Ganguly should know that the crowd here is, potentially, perhaps the most volatile in the world.

An ineffectual push against Srinath soon accounted for Salim, in any case, and Moin

offered a thin nick to Mongia as he tried to hook a rare, but effective, Prasad bouncer. Azhar Mahmood completed a pair when he played down the wrong line before Wasim Akram, visibly tense, followed a wide ball from Srinath.

Srinath's Yorker that accounted for Shoaib Akhtar to end the innings was a worthy conclusion to a vibrant spell of six for 30 in 9.3 overs. Saeed thus became the third

Pakistan batsman after Nazir Mohammad and Mudassar Nazar, father and son, to carry his bat through an innings, but there was no evidence of celebration back at the team hotel last night. That may follow today.

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Hickman lays foundation for more glory

Craig Lord on a swimmer training his thoughts on staying at the top

There is no fat on James Hickman, no luxuriance about him as he sits relaxed but tight in body and mind high up in the seats overlooking the swimming pool, like some big cat in the dry season surveying a distant African plain for the arrival of game.

The winter World Cup season is drawing to a close and Hickman is still tethered by the constraints of both the most intensive six-week training period of his career and a lack of good sport in his past few races before he defends his world short-course title in Hong Kong in April.

His easy winning ways in Glasgow last weekend and Malmö in midweek, the first two of five concluding European rounds of the World Cup, indicate a season of plenty ahead. This weekend in Paris, he will test himself one last time before Hong Kong, but he knows that his efforts will pale by comparison to his achievements in the French capital last year, when he set the world record of 1min 51.76sec when fully rested.

Unrested, he expects to be slower today. Yet Hickman is happy. "I've never had such an intense period of training," he said. "I came through it without getting over-tired, without getting ill. I came down off the heavy work just at the right time. We went right to the limits."

The "we" includes Terry Denison, the coach at Leeds, who was mentor to Adrian Moorhouse, the 1988 Olympic champion, and to whom Hickman turned just over a year ago. That move goes some way to explaining the swimmer's altered ego. After winning Commonwealth and European short-course titles last year, Hickman was

manic, taken by the moment, on-message soundbites about lottery funding flowing thick and fast.

In Malmö, beyond the hype, Hickman is quiet, considered and measured; the brain behind the brawn comes across more sharply than it ever has. He is a man at ease with himself. His work ethic brings praise from Denison for Dave Calleja, the Stockport coach, who nurtured Hickman in Olympic and world short-course champion. "James owes almost everything he's got to Dave. It was the foundation that explains how James can do what he's doing now."

Calleja's work, Denison says, has made Hickman "the most coachable swimmer I've ever had."

Guiding such a talent brings huge responsibility: "It's exciting to coach James, but there's the pressure of it, too — to know you have to get it right. No mistakes, for that one moment to be right [the Olympic final]. I know how fine the line can be."

Now Hickman is successfully converting his skills to the long-course, Olympic pool. In the past six weeks, he has trained only in a 50-metre pool and endured a weights programme that has visibly filled out his chest.

Hickman will soon start his rest period. He all but salivates at the prospect: "I love it. I can feel myself getting faster and I start to get excited about the race. There's no feeling like it."

For a fleeting moment, here is the animal ready to give chase. Then he remembers patience, relaxes and settles back into sit-tight mode, the keeper of one thought: "I know I'm the best fly swimmer in the world and I aim to prove it."

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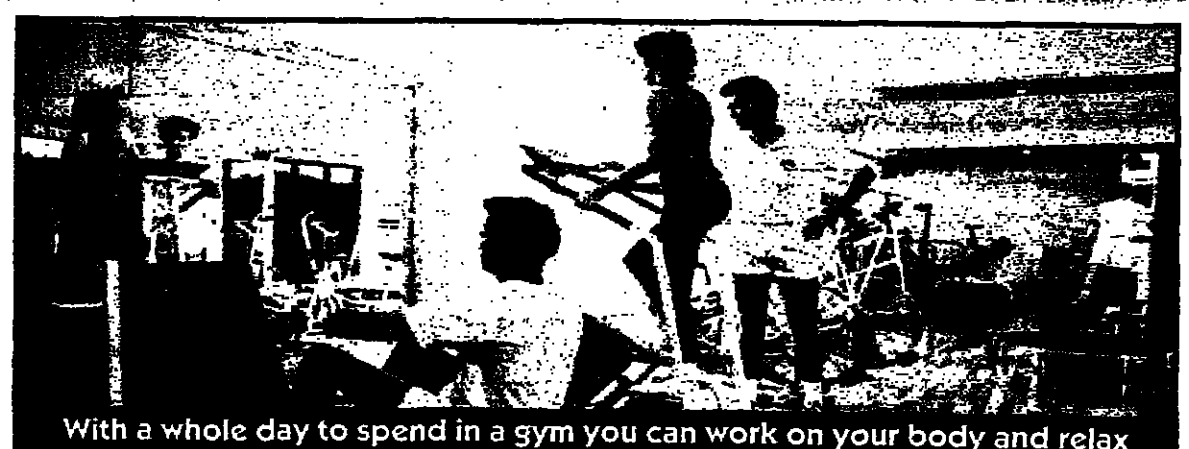
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Cult of the coach creates more problems for Henry

This weekend, Graham Henry, the Wales coach, will find himself facing the kind of scrutiny that he has not experienced before. After his team's defeat at Murrayfield, the second failure in three matches, he would appear to be under the microscope. This is a statistic that some people are beginning to concentrate on.

Yet, at the time, the loss against South Africa in November was not thought of as a reversal at all. In some minds, a kind of victory had been achieved. Indeed, in Wales, something approaching a celebration took place. There was a noticeable lightness, if not exactly a spring, in a Welshman's step as the new dawn, much talked about, seemed to be breaking at last.

It was relative. The grief that was supposed to occur in the wake of the heavy score that had been anticipated, and which might

have proved embarrassing, was replaced by a strong dose of relief that nothing of the sort happened. If it was not a win for Wales, the prevailing verdict was that the team would, at least, have deserved it. This was enough to be going on with.

In more innocent times, when sport did not matter quite so much and we were more at ease with such matters, they used to call this kind of thing a moral victory. This was a pleasant palliative, one that allowed people to feel that a bad result was not so bad after all. In the harsher light of the final few months of the 20th century, we know that there is no such thing in sport.

In another respect, too, there is a sharper, indeed a more cruel, focus and this applies to the way in which a national coach is perceived. He seems to have to ride the extreme highs and lows of his sport, with hardly anything in be-

tween. Everything is made to rest on his shoulders, not merely the fate of his team's fortunes, but that of a whole nation.

The coach in rugby, or the manager in football, is where the buck stops and yet his position and the way in which he earns his daily crust is the most vulnerably exposed. He has to depend so much on others for his own success and to do so, unlike other occupations, in the intense glare of publicity that is so open to fluctuating opinion. There is a jolly merry-go-round in football, where managers change places at every whim and which, given recent developments — Richard Hill of Gloucester, being the latest casualty — rugby is in danger of resembling.

Henry is not in this position, not by any means, but if he has been portrayed as the great redeemer, a figure in whom everyone has faith, a few doubting Thomases have emerged on the touch-

GERALD DAVIES



Rugby Commentary

line after the last match. For the most part, Wales had the better of the contest against Scotland and they could have won, but, once more, they did not bag the prize.

However, unlike the defeat against South Africa, not much comfort could be found in the result at Murrayfield. As a result, questions arise as to what extent should Henry, who, as coach, can only determine the strategy, be the centre of attraction? Or should the players, who failed tactically to win a game that was patently within their grasp, be held more to account?

Carwyn James used to regret the fact that rugby union in this country did not promote, as he would say, "the cult of the coach". This was, of course, in the Sixties and Seventies, when the rugby authorities would not allow the mere mention of the word to pass their lips, such was the distaste towards the idea that a team should have a man at the helm to teach and guide players.

Scotland had what they called "advisers" to the national team, the British Isles persisted in hav-

ing an assistant manager. Once this particular hurdle had been overcome, it took them some time for the coach to be appointed a member of the selection panel. In other words, he would be in overall charge of preparing a team, which, incongruously, he had not played a part in selecting. This was not so long ago.

How times have changed. From the position of toady, a presence to be suffered, the coach is now king. But there should be some reservation. The cult of the coach may have gone too far. Rugby, in its need to generate a strongly-knit band of players, a feeling of closeness and common spirit, acknowledging the game's tactical ebb and flow and the variety of choices to be made from minute to minute, would do better to redress the balance and to promote the "cult" of

the captain. Traditionally, both New Zealand and South Africa have believed in the need of a strong character as captain and the continuity that this brings. The crucial 80 minutes of play between his direct control and whatever messages are passed electronically these days between the coach's bench and the field of play, it is the captain who interprets that advice and translates it into action. The loss of Sean Fitzpatrick to the All Blacks is already measurable in their recent record-breaking series of defeats.

So it is time to take the pressure off Henry, who, after all, has been in his post for barely four months. The more responsibility is thrust upon his shoulders, the more it is taken away from the players. The sooner that the Wales team accepts more accountability for its actions, the sooner it will mature.

RUGBY UNION

Wilkinson's calm air impresses England players

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

TWO of England's senior professionals gave Jonathan Wilkinson their seal of approval yesterday as the youngest player to start a Five Nations Championship match for the first time, against Scotland, at Twickenham tomorrow.

Lawrence Dallaglio, the captain, and Jeremy Guscott, the oldest member of the team, are delighted with the calm approach that Wilkinson, 19, has adopted. Guscott made his international debut ten years ago, at the age of 23. Tomorrow, he will partner Wilkinson in the centre against a Scotland midfield that includes Alan Tait, who played with Wilkinson at Newcastle last season and who was mildly critical of Guscott in an autobiography published last year. Guscott's sometimes sardonic

sense of humour did not endear him to the Scot during the British Isles tour of South Africa, though that is unlikely to colour tomorrow's meeting. "When you play these big matches, the adrenalin soars, the expectation overwhelms you," Guscott said. "All experienced players can do is try to keep you calm, but Jonny has that ability, even at a young age. Jonny has been talking more to us in training than we have to him. He's a real general and that's unusual in one so young."

Dallaglio talks of the young centre's "calmness and reassuring presence" in the preparations for England's entry into the championship, against a side to whom they have been lost since the climatic grand-slam match of 1990 at Murrayfield. Guscott is the

only English survivor of that day — Scotland have Gary Armstrong, Paul Burnell and, among the replacements, Craig Chalmers — and dismisses any significance in England's subsequent hold on the Calcutta Cup.

"History is for the media and those supporters who have been attending matches for some time," Guscott said. "History for players is today. No one goes into a game thinking it will be easy because of what has passed."

Indeed, there has been a certain twitchiness in training this week, which will keep English minds on the job in hand, devoid of any premature thoughts of triple crowns or grand slams. Dallaglio acknowledged that England's cause has been helped by their hard core of six Leicester forwards, even though he expects them to lift their game above the level of club performances.

"Having that core makes it more akin to the way things operate in other countries, where one province may supply several players," Dallaglio said. "The understanding is better and, in the helter-skelter world of English rugby, where you can go from country to club cup match, then country, then Premiership match, it makes coming together as a national squad that much easier."

The first action between England and Scotland will be this evening, at A and under-21 level at Leeds and Orrell respectively, and Dallaglio warned that Scotland's success against Wales on the opening weekend of the championship will send them south in confident mood.

"That game had Jim Telfer written all over it," Dallaglio said, referring to the man who coaches Scotland and prepared the Lions forwards on tour in 1997. Dallaglio among them. "Talk of underdogs will suit Jim and they will be well-motivated. They will do the basics well, but you can always expect a few new ideas from Scotland. We will have to be alert to what they get up to."



Peters, with ball in hand, was a driving force in Scotland's win over Wales at Murrayfield earlier this month

Peters surveyed in new light

Mark Souster says Scotland's No 8 has worked hard to earn respect

ERIC PETERS' rugby career has been a case study in proving people wrong. He burst on to the scene in 1995 with the try of the season against Wales, only to struggle to establish himself as an automatic choice for Scotland. In 1997, he was injured and dropped and returned to favour only in the final two games of last year's championship.

It has been a similar story at club level. He joined Bath from Saracens because they were the club that then set the standard and he had to overcome a bad reputation before being accepted at the Recreation Ground. Belatedly, at the age of 30 and after 27 caps, Peters is achieving the recognition that he deserves.

The Scotland No 8 is the archetypal team man, content to let others garner the headlines, safe in the knowledge that colleagues and opponents hold him in the highest regard. He will do the hard yards, so that others can benefit. Against Wales earlier this month, he was always at the

heart of the action and Bill McLaren, the BBC commentator, was unstinting in his praise. "He was outstanding. His driving play was about the best I have seen. I think he was inspirational."

Not that Peters was allowed to savour the accolade. When he returned to Bath, it was to merciless ribbing. "I got a lot of abuse from the boys about what Bill said. You expect it. But as long as the team does well, I don't mind. It is not all about scoring tries."

In a way, Peters mirrors Scotland. "We are always being written off, but the boys don't put too much attention. We are developing as a side and have improved since the summer tour to Australia. Beating Wales was one step

forward. We have to improve a whole lot more against England."

"They have been our bogey side, but 1990 [the last time that Scotland came out on top] is ancient history. We have to try to achieve our own result, but it will not be easy. England have beaten the world champions and should have beaten Australia."

Their strength is in the pack, which puts a stranglehold on opponents. They are quite happy to slow the game down, keep hold of the ball and wait for the penalties. Being a lighter pack, we want a quicker game."

Although this is the professional age, with many players full-time, Peters keeps his hand in as a surveyor with the

firm for which he has worked since leaving Cambridge University. A balanced life is vital, he believes. "If you are thinking of rugby all the time, you get stale or over-stressed," he said. "It is enjoyable to use your brain rather than simply getting fitter and bigger."

Peters gives much of the credit for his own improvement to Margot Wells, the wife of Allan Wells, the former Olympic 100 metres champion, with whom he trains at least once a week.

"She has helped me tremendously," he said. "She is very good for confidence. Dan Luger trains with her, so does Kenny Logan. She changes the way you think, makes you strong in the right places."

That has been evident from his added pace and greater dynamism. "I suppose I am getting more experienced," he said. "You see situations, not for the first time, and you know how to react." How he will react if England come away from Twickenham with yet another victory remains to be seen.

Gloucester cut back to move forward

BY NICOLAS ANDREWS

GLoucester are to release a dozen full-time professional players in an attempt to cut the club's running costs and make the first team more competitive in the Allied Dunbar Premiership. Philippe Saint-Andre, the new coach, has set himself the target of a top-six finish next season and European qualification for 2000-2001.

It was the failure to establish Gloucester in the upper echelons of the first division that cost Richard Hill his job as director of rugby at King'sholm on Monday night. Saint-Andre, 31, who arrived on a two-year contract with a one-year option as Hill's most important signing in May 1997, expects similar treatment from the board of directors should he also fail.

"If we don't change, Gloucester will always be between seventh and twelfth, or perhaps go down," Saint-Andre said. "If Gloucester are not in the top six, I'll stop. It will be my mistake."

Several of the club's 38 full-time professionals have made little impression in the first team this year and Saint-Andre would feel happier working with a smaller squad.

"We've got a lot of harsh decisions to make," John Fidler, the rugby manager, said. "The squad is too big. We'll have a hard core of full-time professionals — the rest will go part-time. At the end of the day, we're in business. It's not sustainable to pay 38 high wages. We have got to get back to reality."

Saint-Andre, capped 69 times and the captain of France on 34 occasions, intends to improve the squad's fitness and establish a "collective system of rugby", which will see players rested and rotated more regularly.

"The most important thing is the system," he said. "A lot of people think it's an individual sport, but it's not — it's collective. I want the players playing 26 games and no more. This year, they have played too many."

The new coach expects to play only about ten games himself next season. He will watch the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup-tie with Leeds on Sunday, with his first big test being the Tetley's Bitter Cup quarter-final with Harlequins a week later.

ICE HOCKEY

Sheffield set to show more steel

DONALD MCKEE, the Sheffield Steelers coach, believes that his side will have to hit hard and often to beat Manchester Storm, the Sekonda Superleague leaders, in the first leg of the Challenge Cup semi-finals on Saturday (Devlin Barrett writes). "The way to hurt them is to play physical," McKee said. "They're a skating, puck-control team."

Although Manchester have a winning record against Sheffield this season, the Steelers won their last meeting 6-5. McKee points to the record 55 hits his players made in that match. "If we can play a bit better defensively, we can beat them," McKee said. He hopes that Manchester's schedule of three games in as many days will count against them, too.

Nottingham Panthers, who play London Knights on Saturday, also have to guard against fatigue in their cup game against Cardiff the following afternoon.

GOLF: SCOT DISCOVERS HIS BEST FORM AFTER OVERCOMING SERIOUS INJURY

Lawrie's luck turns for the better

FROM JON GREEN IN DOHA, QATAR

FEW rounds can have been more satisfying for Paul Lawrie than the seven under par 65 that he scored here yesterday to take the lead on the second day of the Qatar Masters. Lawrie, like Mark James on Wednesday, has just returned to the game after injury and, again like James, the Scot has returned in splendid form.

Lawrie is 11 under par on 133 in the European PGA Tour event, which places him two shots clear of the chasing pack led by John Bickerton, who struck a hole in one at the par-3 13th, Jean Van de Velde, of France, and Soren Kjeldsen, of Denmark. Lawrie is enjoying his change in fortune: he missed the cut in Dubai last week.

"I don't know where the change came from, but it's nice while it's here," Lawrie said. "I've driven the ball well today and putted nicely, which is a good combination. I've not made one bogey in two rounds and I've only once looked like doing so, when I saved myself three-putting the 12th by hol-

ing a 12-footer." Lawrie, 30, has recently changed coaches. Adam Hunter replacing David Leadbetter. Nick Faldo's former coach, and he believes that the switch has paid off. "I'm working on getting closer to the ball and working the club more left on the way through," he said.

His performance on the



Lawrie: change of coach

desert course is even more impressive, considering that Dubai was his first competitive golf for four months. After injuring his knee at the end of last year, he began playing again only after his wife had given birth to their second son, Michael, on Christmas Day.

"The injury was a stretched cruciate ligament of the left knee," Lawrie, who is based in Aberdeen, said. "I wasn't allowed to hit golf balls for weeks, but I don't know how I got it. An osteopath said it was a footballing injury, but I don't play football."

Raymond Russell, the joint-leader in the first round with Marc Farry, shot a round of two under par, which pushed him down to fifth place, while Bob May, of the United States, and Stephen Gallacher tied for sixth. James, the Europe Ryder Cup captain, and Ian Woosnam are among a group of eight players tied in eighth place at six under par. Farry, of France, fell out of contention

with a disappointing round of 75.

Gallacher, 24, the nephew of Bernard Gallacher, the former Ryder Cup captain, was happy to make the cut after two steady rounds of 69 and 68 and made particular reference to Justin Rose, when commenting on his decision to turn professional at 21. "I was about to turn pro when I was 17 or 18, but my uncle told me to wait and they were wise words. Justin is obviously finding the step-up from amateur quite tough," he said.

Rose scored 71 yesterday, but he failed to make the cut after a poor first round. He was, however, in good company, with Thomas Bjorn, Severiano Ballesteros and Miguel Angel Jimenez also missing out. Rose, who turned professional at 17 after finishing fourth in the Open at Royal Birkdale last year, has now missed the cut in his past 14 tournaments. He also failed to qualify for the European Tour school and now faces an uncertain future of relying on invitations.

HOCKEY

Spice disappoints players

BY CATHY HARRIS AND SYDNEY FRISKIN

CHRIS SPICE, the person that the majority of players wanted to become the new coach of Great Britain, has ruled himself out of the position. His decision will come as a disappointment to several senior England players, who may now reassess their international futures.

Explaining why he would not be applying for the vacant position, Spice, the performance director at the English Hockey Association as well as at the Great Britain Olympic Hockey Board, said: "It was very tempting, but it is just too soon in to the programme. If this had come up five years from now, perhaps I would have put myself forward."

Spice, who was born in Australia and is a former assistant coach to the Australia women's squad, which holds the world Olympic and Commonwealth titles, said that seven candidates would be interviewed at the end of the month, with the successor to Sue Slocombe expected

to be announced next month. Among those believed to have applied are Maggie Souyave, the present England coach, Mike Hamilton, a former director of men's coaching, and Gavin Featherstone, who has taken charge of United States and South Africa squads at previous Olympic Games. Spice said: "If I'm not confident any of them can do the job, I won't be selecting them."

However, he did hint what qualities he would be looking for. "Managing athletes from different environments, superior tactical knowledge and technical ability are key attributes," he said.

Great Britain will swing into action after the European championship in August, but a lack of funding has caused the cancellation of the scheduled tour to Australia and New Zealand in September. Reading, away in Prague from today for the B division

of the men's European indoor club championship, must finish first or second in their pool for a place in the semi-finals. However, they will face strong opposition from Menzieshill, from Scotland, and Dynamo Ekaterinburg, from Russia. The tournament ends on Sunday.

The highlight of the five outdoor national league premiering 2000 matches arranged for Sunday is the match between Cannock, the champions, and Canterbury. The clubs fought out an exciting 3-3 draw the last time they met in October.

The wide gap that separates the top four sides — Cannock, Canterbury, Southgate, and Reading — from the rest of the teams suggests that this quartet will contest the initial stages of the play-off series at Reading on April 17 and 18. At the other end of the table, Hounslow need to win, at the very least, three of their remaining seven fixtures to be safe from relegation. They take on Beeston this weekend.



Has BBC scriptwriting finally lost the plot?

BBC chose to launch two heart-warming ensemble-cast 50-minute series last night. There is probably some Machiavellian corporate reason for this. I suspect they may be conducting a controlled test on genetically modified drama.

The second series of Kay Mellor's *Playing the Field* (BBC1) is a straight drama, featuring Stephen Lawrence (of which more on another occasion). The cast includes Ricky Tomlinson, the cast rough-and-ready show bear who has appeared in some of the strongest television drama of recent years including *The Boys from the Blackstuff*, *early Brookside*, *Riff Raff* and *The Royal Family*.

I caught him on Monday in a short tribute to the director Ken Loach shown on the FilmFour subscription channel. Tomlinson was celebrating Loach's originality, his vision, his unorthodox approach to casting and his burning social com-

mitment. The BBC that launched Loach's career was full of challenging new writers and directors. It was part of the public service brief.

In line with *Nineties American* management theory, though not sadly with the BBC today, the BBC of the Sixties was not afraid to risk failure. Kay Mellor came on Radio 4's *Front Row* on Wednesday to discuss the work of a contemporary television writer. Even the "creator" of a successful series, it seems, ends up as an artist's studio dog-body, colouring in outlines which have been designed, not by a master, but by a committee.

She was too diplomatic to say so, but it must be frustrating. What kind of "writing" is it when you have no control of the plot? When your cherished original idea falls into the hands of the corporate gauleiter? It is, of course, a form of quality control, playing safe, placating the focus groups, not

locking the ratings. It can lead to a form of "blanding down" as insidious in its way as "dumbing down" or "sexing up". Last night's shows displayed the gamut of this system's potential from J to Q — that is from really rather dismal to really quite good.

Harbour Lights (BBC1) put that nice Nick Berry from *Heartbeat* as harbour-master of a nice old fishing town called Bridhaven, a nice old English made-up name in the tradition of Melchester in *Roy of the Rovers*.

The title sequence, a flashback to the death of Berry's best friend during a tempestuous diving accident, suggested that tragedy could be on the menu. But this was quickly dispelled when we discovered that Bridhaven is, for some unexplained reason, inhabited almost entirely by lovable Cockneys.

Otherwise this was England-land, that comforting recreation of

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

an old-fashioned vision of our past. Even the black café owner, Elvis, sounded as if he was about to burst into a cheery cypso at any moment. We began with a Cook's tour of the characters, all of whom turned out to be rather dull, spoke wooden dialogue, and lived in dull homes.

Then the empty yacht of the local fisherman drifted past the harbour. A tragic

mystery, perhaps, like the *Mary Celeste* or the madness of Donald Crowhurst. My theory was that he had jumped to that boring town. In the event this proved to be one of those light-hearted stories about a lovable bigamist with a heart of gold, running away from his responsibilities. When he returned everyone decided that they loved him the way he was, although he did have to give up his girlfriend, as the wives wouldn't put up with a bit on the side.

Call me old-fashioned, but I think he should have been jailed for wearing an offensive pullover. I suspect this was the BBC's GM controlled test and has an added interest-repelling gene. Doubtless it will prove compulsive viewing for some, much in the way some people get addicted to plastic pots containing hydrogenated pasta snacks.

Playing the Field (BBC1) is set

in the South Yorkshire town of Castlefield, just up the M1 from Doncaster and fairly presumably. Apart from the name, it has little in common with *Harbour Lights*, however. Two of the cast, John Thomson and James Nesbitt, starred in *Cold Feet*. The two shows share many virtues.

If *Cold Feet* was a sitcom that shaded off into a straight drama, *Playing the Field* is a straight drama, teetering on the edge of sitcom. As with *Cold Feet* the humour is understated and deftly applied. The editing and direction are fast and witty, the dialogue sharp, lively and convincing. Above all, the characters are engaging, funny, sympathetic, alive.

I missed the first series, and had to work quite hard sorting out who was who among the women's football club and their male appendages. Some of the women, it would seem, have also had this

problem. At Rita's 40th birthday bash, the husbands did the by-now obligatory *Full Monty* turn, but last night's opener shared that film's wistful but poignant humanity. Perhaps this was because it was written by Kay Mellor herself. I hope the other writers have coloured in the outlines as brightly.

Fred Dibnah's *Industrial Age* (BBC2) wallows in a different aspect of nostalgia, but unlike *Harbour Lights* it is based on something real. Dibnah is famous for demolishing factory chimneys, but his real love is restoring old machinery and he has become a national expert on the contraptions that once made Britain great.

He is a bit of a professional character, but I can forgive him anything for that Lancashire accent, where machines are "the wuckoarse of Industrial Revolution" and you can "demonstrate" how the "wool building turned" before "the workes closed."

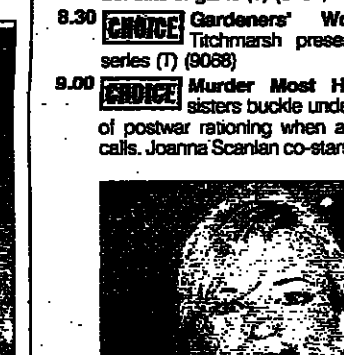
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (70830)
- 7.00 Breakfast News (1) (48838)
- 9.00 Kilroy (1) (887608)
- 9.45 The Vanessa Show (1) (412008)
- 10.55 News: Weather (1) (6358432)
- 11.00 Change That (375108)
- 11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (827208)
- 11.55 News: Weather (1) (1455155)
- 12.00pm Call My Bluff (19277)
- 12.30 Wipeout (562677)
- 12.55 The Weather Show (1) (48091819)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (1) (45797)
- 1.30 Regional News: Weather (47713887)
- 1.40 Neighbours: Jack's relation hops come under threat (1) (25529242)
- 2.05 Ironside: A hit-man plans to sabotage Ed's spine operation (1) (3749703)
- 2.55 Body Spies (509303)
- 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (561722)
- 3.45 Spider (2713428) 3.50 Smart on the Road (3878426) 4.05 Rugrats (6089722)
- 4.30 L & K Friday (5798161) 4.55 Newsround Extra (1212161) 5.10 Blue Peter (670777)
- 5.35 Neighbours (1) (1) (142906)
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News: Weather (1) (894)
- 6.30 Regional News Magazine (364)
- 7.00 Snapshots Profile of the teenage chart sensation Billie (1) (6971)
- 7.30 Top of the Pops includes performances by Lenny Kravitz, Blondie, Blur, Barenaked Ladies, The Moffatts, Next of Kin, UNKLE featuring Ian Brown and Sister Wyn (1) (548)
- 8.00 Ground Force: The team renovate a small Alton garden (2/8) (1) (5812)
- 8.30 Birds of a Feather: Doris shares her tips for a happy marriage (1) (1426)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (1) (5890)



Oprah Winfrey talks about her latest Hollywood film role (9.30pm)

- 9.30 Parkinson: Oprah Winfrey talks exclusively about the making of her new film *Beloved* (1) (828074)
- 10.25 The Star Chamber (1993) Michael Douglas stars as a judge who joins a secret society devoted to taking revenge on criminals beyond the reach of the law. Directed by Peter Hyams (1) (588908)
- 12.05am The Big End (1) (1) (6728117)
- 12.35 There Are No Children Here (1993) Drama, starring Oprah Winfrey as a proud single mother struggling to protect her two sons from criminal elements. Anita W. Adson directs (1) (2449778)
- 2.00 Weather (365589)
- 2.05 BBC News 24 (54590001)
- 10.25 Just Up Your Street (1/6) (31258)
- 11.00 FILM: The Star Chamber (1) (53926)
- 12.40am The Big End (1) (1) (6757575) 1.15 FILM: There Are No Children Here (1) (3641001) 2.35 News Headlines (1) (4012778) 2.40 BBC News 24 (5725099)

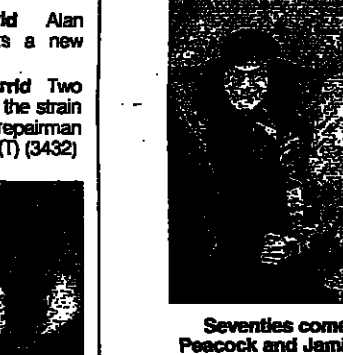
- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Harry Potter (3871242) 7.05 Takeaway (6889884) 7.30 Snorks (7673677) 7.50 Short Change (6654971) 8.18 Ruffo (9891277) 8.20 Taz-Mania (7833432) 8.40 Polka Dot Shorts (3812160) 8.50 Hair Jeremy (3816354) 9.00 Storytime (5637187) 9.10 See You, See Me (4469277) 9.30 Numbertime (1724722) 9.45 Come Out (1729277) 10.00 Teleubites (95258) 10.30 Megamaths (7788338) 10.50 Look & Read (7788074) 11.10 Landline (7655221) 11.30 English File (6797) 12.00pm News (17818) 12.30 Working Lunch (35703) 1.00 Johnson and Friends (9470149)
- 1.10 The Travel Hour (1) (9658971)
- 2.10 Sporting Greats: Bob Champion talks to Eamonn Holmes (51877180)
- 2.40 News: Weather (1) (3146258)
- 2.45 Match of the Day: George Graham (918) (1) (2513000)
- 3.25 News: Weather (1) (8552386)
- 3.30 Awash with Cash (245)
- 4.00 Kaye Advice for parents (809703)
- 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (1) (6080180)
- 4.55 Eastern Bodyguards (1) (3334161)
- 5.30 Today's the Day (1) (513)
- 6.00 The Simpsons: Homer suffers a heart attack (1) (189703)
- 6.20 The Simpsons: Marge tackles an unscrupulous businessman (1) (190819)
- 6.45 Robot Wars with Craig Charles and Philippa Forrester (1) (145722)
- 7.15 Electric Circus (1) (242838)
- 7.30 **CRIME**: Country House Lady: Tavistock causes a stir by announcing that she has arranged to have her coffin made (1) (890)
- 8.00 Trust Me, I'm a Doctor: The health benefits of garlic (1) (6161)
- 8.30 **CRIME**: Gardeners' World: Alan Titchmarsh presents a new series (1) (8068)
- 9.00 **CRIME**: Murder Most Horrid: Two sisters boked under the strain of postwar rationing when a republican calls. Joanna Scanlan co-stars (1) (3432)



Sara Cox is a panellist on the irreverent music quiz (9.30pm)

- 9.30 Never Mind the Buzzcocks: With Sara Cox and Junior Simpson (1) (5567)
- 10.00 The Young Ones: The students attempt to keep warm (1) (18548)
- 10.30 Newsnight With Kirsty Wark (1) (22142)
- 11.15 Video Night Shorts (1) (384890)
- 11.20 Six Degrees of Separation (1993) Premiere. A con-man climbs the ladder of New York society by posing as actor Sidney Poitier's son. Acclaimed drama based on a true story, starring Al Smith. Directed by Fred Schepisi (1) (51987)
- 1.05am Late with Jackie Hollister: With Catston and James (1) (516881)
- 2.05 Weather (3377152) 2.10 Close
- 3.00 BBC Learning Zone: Design and Technology (86440) 5.00 Close

- 5.30am ITN Morning News (35871)
- 6.00 GMTV (3367154)
- 9.25 Takeaway (1) (555418)
- 10.30 This Morning (1) (1288438)
- 12.15pm ITN News (1) (7857155)
- 12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (1) (38529)
- 12.59 ITV Crimetimeplus (4808687)
- 1.00 WEST: Shortland Street: Marnie tells all to Nick (36083)
- 1.00 WALES: Wish You Were Here? Includes visits to Australia, Mauritius, Ireland and Rhodes (1) (1) (36053)
- 1.30 Home and Away: Concorde grows for Joey's mental state (1) (58600)
- 2.00 The Jerry Springer Show: Sleaze galore in the no-holds-barred chat show from the States (1) (5672258)
- 2.45 Supermarket Sweep (1) (431426)
- 3.15 ITN News Headlines (1) (4157780)
- 3.25 ITN News (1) (7307203)
- 3.25 CITV: Cartoon Time (8759364) 3.40 Animal Stories (286703) 3.50 Adam's Family Tree (5601258) 4.15 Gladiators: Train 2 Win (182123) 4.45 Comic Artch: With Cleopatra (5702557)
- 5.10 A Country Practice (8010967)
- 5.40 ITN Early Evening News (1) (677797)
- 6.00 Home and Away: Concorde grows for Joey's mental state (1) (1) (36744)
- 6.25 WALES: Wales Tonight (1) (552722)
- 6.35 WEST: ITV Weather (34780)
- 6.30 WEST: The West Tonight (1) (432)
- 7.00 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right: Game show (5/16) (1) (4567)
- 7.30 Coronation Street: Natalie demands the truth from Ian (1) (616)
- 8.00 Aflame: Katrina gets the result of her cancer scan (7/8) (1) (6667)



Seventies comedy with Harry Peacock and Jamie Beck (8.30pm)

- 8.30 Days Like These: Katy throws a surprise party to celebrate Eric's birthday (2/13) (1) (722)
- 9.00 Britain's Worst Shoppers (1) (2432)
- 10.00 News at Ten: Weather (1) (82154)
- 10.30 ITN News and Weather (1) (150635)
- 10.40 Videotech: Brits Winners Special: Review of the music ceremony (189906)
- 11.10 WEST: Live From Amsterdam: Arena: Tina Turner in concert (738432)
- 11.10 WALES: Bob Monkhouse on Campus: Comedy at the Oxford Union (1) (38432)
- 12.10am WEST: Tales from the Deskside: A bookmaker takes on a spooky challenge. Danny Aello stars (571255)
- 12.10 WALES: We Can Work It Out: Phantom phone calls (671255)
- 12.40 Pirate TV: Highlights from the boys' adventures (13/13) (517223)
- 1.10 Dead Silence (1991) Three women agree to keep quiet about accidentally murdering a man, a pedophile while drunk-driving. (843240)
- 2.40 The Haunted House (1) (5354681)
- 3.10 Baywatch (1) (1) (3889730)
- 4.00 Trisha Show: Earlier (1) (1) (21339)
- 5.00 Coronation Street (1) (1) (71778)

- As HTV West except: 12.20pm-12.30 Central News: Weather (1) (3299387) 1.00 Wish You Were Here (1) (1) (555418) 1.30 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (1) (555418) 1.50 Home and Away (1) (1) (555418) 2.00-2.30 Central News: Weather (1) (3299387) 2.30-3.00 Shortland Street (9013887) 3.25-3.40 Central News: Weather (1) (3299387) 3.40-4.00 Central News: Weather (1) (3299387) 4.00-4.15 Home and Away (1) (1) (555418) 4.15-4.30 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (1) (555418) 4.30-4.45 Home and Away (1) (1) (555418) 4.45-5.00 The Jerry Springer Show (1) (1) (555418) 5.00-5.30 Asian Eye (716545)
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SWIMMING 46

Hickman lays careful plans to ensure that he stays on top

SPORT

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 19 1999

RUGBY UNION 48

Peters has the drive to give Scotland heart at Twickenham



Caretaker manager sweeps into office with pledge to make best of short-term job

Keegan rallies to England cause

By Oliver Holt
Football Correspondent

THE agony of the short-term, part-time arrangement that the Football Association has come to with the new England caretaker manager became apparent yesterday when anyone who might have forgotten was reminded of just how inspirational the man can be.

Four months of exposure to his character, to his spirit, will merely make the leaving of Kevin Keegan the harder for everyone when he returns to the open arms of Fulham in June, and expose England and their supporters to the misery of paradise lost.

Keegan was good yesterday. In fact, he was brilliant. At his first press conference as the man in charge of the national team, he was so persuasive, so eloquent, so full of energy and excitement for the task of leading England into their next four matches that he left his audience in a swoon.

Rivals draw clear49
Tribute to O'Neill49

After the ham-fistedness of Glenn Hoddle, Keegan made almost hypnotic listening. His dynamism spread across the room at a London hotel, infusing everyone who was there with new optimism about England's chances of qualifying for the 2000 European championship finals in Holland and Belgium. He gave a beguiling vision of his England: an England in which every player would be encouraged to roar the national anthem, an England that would attack at every opportunity, an England with Alan Shearer retained as captain, a recreation of the brief alliance that they forged in Newcastle.

It would be an England, too, in which the critical comments of players such as Frank Lele, who suggest that England have little but building spirit in their armoury, would be pinned to the Wembley dressing-room wall. "I want to ram that sort of stuff down the



Flanked by Davies, left, and Wilkinson, Keegan prepares to address the media yesterday on his plans for England during his four matches in charge. Photograph: Gill Allen

throats of the people who said it," Keegan said.

For a man acclaimed as the sport's Messiah, he even talked of raising a national hero from the footballing dead when he hinted that he would recall Paul Gascoigne to the England team that will face Poland in Keegan's first and most crucial match in charge, the qualifying tie against Poland at Wembley on March 27.

"I am a fan of Paul," he said. "I think I stand in the same position as every other Englishman in the country with him. I see a tremendous talent with something to offer, someone who will be in my mind — only in my mind at the moment — when I pick the squad to play Poland. It is up to the players to show me what they can do and that includes Paul. The onus is on him."

Keegan was sympathetic,

not combative. He said that he understood all the doubts and concerns about his part-time status. His aim, he said, was to leave his successor in such a strong position that he would be inheriting a dream job.

It was all wonderful, mouth-watering stuff, the kind of stirring, motivational pep-talk that not even Terry Venables could match. But the longer he talked, the more obvious the essential contradictions in his

position became, the more painful the realisation of his transitory status grew.

The man sitting on the dais in the York Room in the basement of the Metropole Hotel on the Edgware Road is, as the FA has rightly identified, the best man for the job. Yet he is also the man who will depart after three competitive games and who will leave a poisoned chalice for whoever follows him, especially if he wins all

his European championship qualifying ties, against Poland, Sweden and Bulgaria.

Even three victories would not assure England of qualifying for the finals and Keegan's successor would then be faced with two tricky matches in September to finish the job. The nation, meanwhile, would quite understandably be grieving for the man that got away.

Keegan proved even with his words and his thoughts yesterday that, his commitments

to Fulham notwithstanding, he is eminently equipped to lift the team out of the trough that it has sunk into. That has never been in question. The irony is that for all its preaching, the FA has sacrificed the long term for the short term in the most iniquitous way.

There were elements, for instance, of Keegan and his audience talking at the most basic of cross purposes, of the new

England manager forgetting that everyone desperately wants him to succeed and that that desperation will create a belief in him that he has guaranteed he will shatter.

"I have come into this with my eyes wide open," Keegan said. "I know I have got the chance to make the doubters believe again. I have done it before a few times in my life and I hope I will do it a few times more before they put me six feet under."

In that case, at least, Keegan singularly failed to understand that no one is doubting him, that there is no question of anyone not believing, no question of him having to prove anyone wrong. We all know he has got what it takes to succeed — and that is the problem. He said again that it was his loyalty to Fulham that was preventing him from taking a job that he would have "jumped at" in other circumstances. It was just that the time was not right.

"Please don't say that I am demeaning the England job," he said, "because I am not. I don't think loyalty to Fulham is a weakness. I want to go back there and finish the job. No one is trying to pull the wool over your eyes. This is a compromise, but sometimes this kind of arrangement gives you the freedom to do things that you could not do in other situations."

"I see advantages in all of this and it will give the FA a bit of breathing space. I am already thinking about picking my first squad and walking up the tunnel for that match against Poland. I hope that if I do the job well, maybe it will come around again."

David Davies, the FA's executive director, sat alongside him and rationalised the arrangement by saying that the FA would have a "significantly wider choice of candidates" at the end of the season. By then, though, their first choice was already turning his mind to other matters. "My team for Notts County on Saturday is..." he said with a smile. He never reached the end of the sentence.

Wilkinson handed pivotal role in hunt for new king

By Matt Dickinson

THE SEARCH for the next England coach starts this morning and, given that he may prove elusive, it is probably just as well that the Football Association has four months to hunt him down. Where on earth will they find the man who can lead England to greatness?

Ewood Park, the home of Brian Kidd, appears to be a good bet, although there will be plenty of other names cast in the air.

Appropriately enough, it is the son of a coalminer who will put on the torch and helmet to lead the FA's search party. Howard Wilkinson, a little frazzled after his week under the spotlights as caretaker coach, returns to his

day job of technical director and his principle task will be the installation of Keegan's successor. It makes him an influential man. That much was apparent in Wilkinson's appearance alongside Keegan on the dais yesterday.

If he cannot be England coach — and there is little doubt that he wanted it — Wilkinson has the next best thing. He is the man who will nominate the England coach. He will also be a significant part of Keegan's backroom team, with his flight already booked to Armenia to watch Poland play before England's critical European championship qualifier on March 27.

Wilkinson will work alongside Derek Fazackerley, the former Newcastle United and Blackburn Rovers coach, who will lead the Bisham Abbey training sessions, and Arthur Cox, the Fulham scout, who will now travel the country with two hats on.

John Gorman, the former assistant to Glenn Hoddle, will be leaving the FA, while Ray Clemence, the goalkeeping coach, and Peter Taylor, the England Under-21 manager, are staying put.

"It would be stupid and irresponsible for me to leave Howard on the outside," Keegan said, and they appeared to be pulling in the

right direction. "Kevin and I have a lot in common," Wilkinson said. "Both our fathers were miners and where we have got is characterised by hard work. Kevin will select the squad, pick the team, choose how they play. Everything outside that, where possible, will be provided by myself and the organisation that backs me."

It is as the kingmaker, though, that Wilkinson will be forging his most important job yet at the FA, filling the role that Jimmy Armfield had when he canvassed football's great and good before successfully nominating Terry Venables as England coach. Now it is Wilkinson who will be at training grounds making discrete inquiries to take before the FA's international sub-committee.

It is a safe bet that he will be talking to Alex Ferguson to see whether a Manchester United triumph in the European Cup will make him ready to take on the England job. He will take the opportunity to ask Ferguson about Brian Kidd's credentials for the post. And he will almost certainly journey up to Blackburn Rovers to ask Kidd himself whether he is ready, just as he will sound out the likes of Bryan Robson, David Platt and Roy Hodgson.

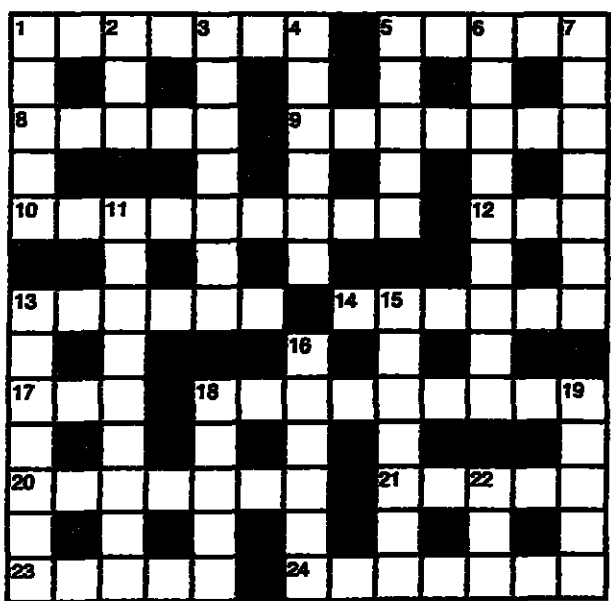
The FA are confident that the search will become easier rather than harder as managers reach the end of the season and Wilkinson is confident that mistakes will not be repeated. "We will do as much as possible to avoid this situation happening again," he said. "I will not be on my bike here, there and everywhere, but we will make sure we have a reasonable idea who has the ability and who wants to do the job. Hopefully, we will also have made changes so that more people want it."

Keegan included, perhaps. Adamant as he was yesterday that he would return to Fulham full-time in the summer, four days is a long time in football. And he has four months to change his mind.

TOMORROW — THE BEST COLUMNISTS

- Michael Lynagh on English prospects for the Five Nations Championship
- Football Saturday with Gary Neville, Lynne Truss and Oliver Holt

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1645

ACROSS

- 1 Groom's helper (4,3)
- 5 Edible part of animal (5)
- 8 Spirit Prospero released (5)
- 9 Mild tease (3,4)
- 10 Multi-bed room (9)
- 12 Geol. period (3)
- 13 Castle wall: type of bridge (6)
- 14 A reptile: Bill, in Alice (6)
- 17 Small (Scots) (3)
- 18 Thrown: extrapolated (9)
- 20 Tread roughly underfoot (7)
- 21 Decorate (5)
- 23 Useful: dexterous (5)
- 24 Conference city, 1945 (7)

DOWN

- 1 Unspind (5)
- 2 Do winter sports (3)
- 3 Uneasy, mildly sick feeling (7)
- 4 Lancs. town: wrestling hold (6)
- 5 Old stick-in-the-mud (5)
- 6 Bouncing with energy (9)
- 7 Sail-lifting rope (7)
- 11 Create big fuss (5,4)
- 13 Put under spell (7)
- 15 Not accurate (7)
- 16 Little shepherdess (2,4)
- 18 Young pet: type of fat (5)
- 19 Hard-wearing twill (5)
- 22 Ancient with 13 ac. a court (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1644

- ACROSS: 1 Fulmar 5 Stoned 8 Moor 9 Syllable
10 Sprain 12 Gibe 15 Assassination 16 Idle 17 Unger
19 Chequers 21 Flap 22 Ogress 23 Manage
DOWN: 2 Unopposed 3 Mar 4 Rashness 5 Sell
6 Orang-utan 7 Eel 11 Arabesque 13 Boomerang
14 Uncle Sam 18 Less 20 Hug 21 Fin

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THE NAMES IN THE FRAME FOR THE HOT SEAT

■ **KEVIN KEEGAN:** Fulham once advertised for "a manager/genius," and Lancaster Gate will know the feeling. Those who know him best all suggest that he will stick to his guns. Come June, he will walk.

■ **ROY HODGSON:** Once regarded as a shoe-in to replace Glenn Hoddle, but Hodgson's reputation has been tarnished thanks to the unhappy end to his spell with Blackburn Rovers. Has managed Switzerland and Internazionale and is seeking employment.

■ **BOBBY ROBSON:** Said "not goodbye, but farewell", when leaving the England job in 1990. History has been kind to his eight-year tenure, which encompassed a World Cup semi-final. Is due to leave PSV Eindhoven this summer, but why would he want it?

■ **HOWARD WILKINSON:** Not the most glorious of caretakers, even if France hardly provided the most benevolent opposition. After being snubbed for Keegan, his desire to replace him must have been dashed. Crucially, his philosophy



Kidd: impressive pedigree

that "sport is not entertainment" has won him few friends in the media.

■ **TERRY VENABLES:** Commands the players' respect and has supporters among journalists. Was a penalty or two away from the final of Euro 96, but his business dealings alarmed the FA's kingmakers.

■ **DAVID PLATT:** A distinguished international career and keen to move into full-time management. Did not uproot any trees at Sampdoria under trying circumstances, but could be groomed for leadership under a more senior figure.

■ **BRYAN ROBSON:** Combined his managerial duties at Middlesbrough with a coaching position under Venables, but despite hinting that he would like the job, he has, at least temporarily, ruled himself out. Recently signed a new five-year contract and appears to have enough troubles on Teesside.

■ **JOHN GREGORY:** A sharp learning curve since leaving Wycombe Wanderers 12 months ago. He has had to deal with disparate personalities, such as Savo Milosevic, Stan Collymore and Doug Ellis. Villa's recent slump and a tendency to speak as he finds would count against him.

■ **BRIAN KIDD:** Nicknamed "The Legend" at Old Trafford, Kidd can boast an impressive CV that includes two England caps as well as playing and coaching for Manchester United. Blackburn have lost only once since he replaced Hodgson, but has still to establish a public profile.

GEORGE CAULKIN

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